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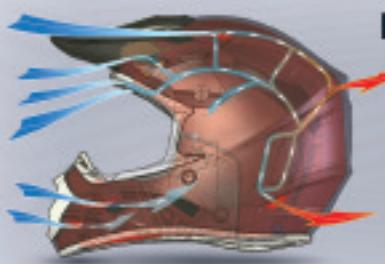
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COVER: Steve Dixon's MX1 star Jason Dougan makes his long awaited DBR cover debut – what no body warmer? © Sutty

CONTENTS: Buildbase CCM's Stephen Sword gets on the gas at Hawkstone Park's pre-season international © Sutty

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COMMENT

Is it wrong to fall asleep in your chair at 11am on a Thursday? One minute I'm staring at the computer screen, proof-reading Stateside, the next my eyelids are getting heavy and my head's lolling backwards. It's not Steve Cox' fault – you can call him many things but boring is never one of them. Nor am I poorly despite my girlfriend insisting I must be 'coming down with something' before listing her own set of symptoms (why do women always do that only to then scoff that we're making a meal of man flu?).

I do, however, suspect that having been broken all winter the recent repair of the boiler may have something to do with it. So after spending the last four months shivering I'm now sat within touching distance of a super-sized radiator that's pumping out iron-smelting heat on an already warm, sunny day. I would shut it down if the on/off knob thing was attached but fortunately Steve the handyman is coming to my rescue this afternoon with a pair of pliers. But not before The Bear's threatened to dangle his back wheels in my stupefied mouth!

To be fair it's not just the unhealthily tropical temperature in the office that's making me nod off – it's been a busy ole month and we've been burning the candle at both ends. Little Silver followed by The Tough One followed by the Hawkstone International followed by Canada Heights means it's been flat-out with lots of M-way miles interspersed with some cracking action. I know I say it every year but this season really is shaping up into something special.

It's a bummer we've lost The Reverend so early on but Zach Osborne versus Arnaud Tonus for the British MX2 crown looks set to be a proper season-long slug-fest and there must be at least six different riders in with a shout of winning a Maxxis MX1 moto this year. On the world stage Steve Dixon's boys also look a threat but after his showing at Hawkstone how much of a title candidate is Tommy Searle? I reckon Roczen has got a fight on his hands. It might not have gone his way in the US but Tommy's come back faster, fitter and hungrier than ever. Roll on Bulgaria...

On the home front another battle's been brewing and it's a battle that potentially could have more serious implications than anything that's going to be overseen by Giuseppe Luongo this season. The situation involves a well-known Somerset coastal town and a well-known annual competition to see who can do most laps of a sand-based course over a specified time. What the hell am I on about? Well having lost the tender to run this well-known annual competition over a sand-based course over a specified time at the well-known Somerset coastal town, RHL Activities Ltd are taking the well-known event's well-known name that they apparently own and running the Weston Beach Race at – wait for it, wait for it – Swansea!

And that's not all. RHL Activities Ltd are running their race at Swansea the same weekend – October 7-9 – as the company that was awarded the tender is running the Events 22 Weston Beach Enduro at Weston-super-Mare. At a time when off-road sport is under constant pressure we've got a situation which potentially could kill what has been – since it started in 1983 – one of the biggest events in the UK calendar. It's such a crazy situation that I could be forgiven for thinking I dreamt it during my Thursday morning nap.

But you know something? Thinking about it I reckon it's little more than a storm in a tea cup. The way I see it, your everyday Joe Clubman wants to race on the beach at Weston-super-Mare because he wants to – as has always been the case since it started in 1983 – bang bars with the top names in off-road racing. And the thousands of spectators who've been drawn to watch the racing on the beach at Weston-super-Mare since it started in 1983 do so because they want to watch the top names in off-road racing banging bars with your everyday Joe Clubman. And the top names in off-road racing want to bang bars with the top names in off-road racing. Because that's just what the top names in off-road racing do.

Top name in off-road racing David Knight's signed to race the Events 22 Weston Beach Enduro. And that, I reckon, indicates the way this thing is going to go...

Sean

James Stewart certainly is an arresting sight on a SX bike – but in a Toyota Tundra?



Steve Cox
©

NEWSHOUND!

DEPUTY DAWG'S DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS AND STUFF...

Here's one that'll get your heartbeats racing... Motors TV have just obtained the rights to show each and every round of the AMA outdoor nationals LIVE starting from the first round at Hangtown on Saturday **May 21**. The time difference between here and America means that for 12 weekends this year some of the best motocross action in the world can be seen for free on a Saturday evening. How sweet is that?

On the flipside, just over a week before the FIM world championship starts in Seville the very same channel has been forced to abandon its plans to cover the series in full which means no more lazy Sunday afternoons spent in front of the box watching Cairoli and the crew do their stuff. If you want to see GP action live you'll have to join up to Youthstream's spin-off website www.mx-life.tv and watch it at yer 'puter. Bonkers!

The AMA supercross series has been absolutely bonkers this year too and it just got even more bonkerser! For starters Bubba spanked himself in Daytona but raced on, Villopoto failed to make the Main in Jacksonville where Bubba spanked himself again and then in Toronto Ryan Dungey took the win as Villopoto and Stewart collided knocking them both down although they fortunately stayed unspanked. After all that spankingly good drama privateer Chad Reed took over the series lead with just five rounds left to run.

The real drama kicked off t'week after though. Dean Wilson wound up the world when he tweeted 'you effin kiddin me rite now. stuck in canada... again' (his smartphone apparently

doesn't do caps or spell check) as he complained about flight delays rather than visa problems and then Bubba got banged up for impersonating a police officer. Say what?

Yup, it transpires that the Tiger Woods of supercross – whatever that means – likes to drive around flashing reds and blues at fellow motorists. Unfortunately, like George Michael, Bubba flashed the wrong bloke as he inadvertently tried to pull an off-duty copper – well, three of 'em actually. D'oh! After the cops called in the offence James and his manfriend were both swiftly fingered and taken to a local law station for further questioning.

Released on bail it's uncertain just what will happen next. Impersonating a police officer is considered a federal offence in America which could mean that James will go down although it's unlikely as the impersonation was simply in the form of a light show and it's not like James was fully dressed as a highway patrolman or owt and he definitely didn't demand anyone respect his authoritah.

After a few days of silence James finally released a statement on his website JS7.com. "Thanks to all that are standing by me. I hope to resolve this incident quickly and show people that I am someone that upholds the law and someone they can respect as a competitor and as a person."

The first two rounds of the Maxxis have been hotter than a Bollywood Burner with loads of bar-to-bar racing, some big old crashes and one or two near misses n' all – yeah that's right Zach, we saw your little paw slip off the bar at Little Silver you



Quick Robin, to the Brymobile!



© Mark Pick



"Say Buzz, why do they call me Braveheart?"

© rayarcher.com

lucky little Virginian!

One of the highlights of the series so far for me though was watching Bry Mac ride the Maxxis Henderson LPE Batmobile down Devon way. The machine – that looked remarkably like a KX250F – came complete with an oil slick dispenser and smoke screen. Rumour has it that team boss Steve James was so impressed with it all he's getting the team technicians to install a bucket of banana skins to the back mudguard for Lyng and Irm Bry'll toss 'em off into the path of his competition as he races around. Remember kids, you read it here first!

At Canada Heights current MX1 red plate holder Shaun Simpson wanted to know what his not-so-new nickname is all about. He'd wonder why we call him Woody, would he? The thing with Shaun is that he's never had a decent moniker – Shaun Star don't work, SS ain't a good idea, Simbo sucked and Braveheart took off like Concorde with a flatty so we figured we'd bless him with Woody, not a woody, just Woody. Why? Dunno but it's definitely got nothing to do with him looking like The Bear's

favourite character from Toy Story, okay? Good.

The UK's premier mid-season pre-season international went off at Hawkstone like a good 'un although it wasn't so great for Luke Hawkins who took a nasty tumble in the opening laps of the first MX2 race. The 17-year-old was airlifted to hospital but after a 10-day stay is now back home and well on the road to recovery. It'll be great to see him back at the races real soon!

While Tommy Searle won the MX2 class overall and Clement Desalle took MX1, part-time DBR columnist Max Anstie claimed the mixed-capacity Super Final when Tommy's bike went boomshakalakaboom and stopped halfway up the hill! The ginger ninja was absolutely ecstatic to have taken the chequers and promptly disappeared for a lap of honour – or was it to check out the nearby nudist colony which would explain why he came back looking so pale. What? That's his natural skin colour? Got ya!

The Newshound office phone has been ringing like crazy this month with old friends and new

calling up to shoot some s**t. Two calls in particular stand out – one from Mike Forster who's built the sickest YZ125 ever and t'other from James Camp (no sniggering in the back there) who's enthusiastically pushing n' promoting his local track – Yarley Moto Park.

Situated in sunny Somerset at the centre of an ancient and mystical Wells/Glastonbury/Cheddar triangle, the recently revamped and totally awesome circuit has been hosting motocross events for the last 60 years or so and is now available to hire once again. For more details and to see some sweet snaps of the place log on to www.yarleymotopark.co.uk where you'll also find contact details for Steve Day who's running the place these days.

Back to that YZ125 now and what a machine! As the mechanic of the rider who last seriously had a run at the British MX2 title on a two-smoker – that was Brad Anderson back in 2005 by the way – multi-championship winning spanner spinner Mike Forster certainly knows a thing or two about tuning two-stroke as well as four-stroke motocross machinery.

After quitting life on the road as a team mechanic to start up his own business – MXPROTECH (www.mxprotech.com) – Mike decided to start up a team so he could get back on the road again. Cunning huh? Concentrating on two-stroke racing with lanky Luke Remmer, the bike Mike's built is a real work of art and features plenty of trick parts from DEP Pulse, Hardcore Racing and Talon who are the masterminds behind the super-light titanium spoked wheels.

Support for the team also comes from RK chains, No Fear, Pro-Clean, Fro Systems, Michelin by Steve Plain, Planet, Zeronine, WRP plastics, Surf n' Turf shelters and FatCat Motoparc. Phewsh! Look out for the #24 Yamahauler at the Red Bull Pro Nationals, ACU two-stroke championship and occasional wildcard appearances in the Maxxis.

Back on the subject of the Maxxis again there are two of them coming up – one at Lyng on **April 16** and t'other at Milton Moto Park on **May 1**. The same weekend as British championship MX returns to Northamptonshire the third weekend of BSEC action takes place at Rogers Hill Raceway in Dorset. The week after that Red Bull Pro Nationals action resumes at the amazing Landrake in Cornwall on **May 8/9**. See you there...





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Sounds too good to be true? Well it jolly well isn't because that's the awesome prize package we've got up for grabs – but there's one slight snag. Before you can enter you have to sign

up to dirtZone – our new social networking community dedicated to fans of everything off-road.

Since last autumn we've been slaving away behind the scenes alongside our pals at sister publication Trials and Motocross News and online partners Addictive Interactive to create brand-new websites. Stacked with breaking news and over-flowing with opinion, the new websites will operate entirely independently of each other – just like the printed products.

But we are joining forces for the most exciting aspect of the new sites – yep, we're talking about dirtZone. Once you've registered with dirtZone you'll be able to upload your own pics and videos, create your own unique profile and bench race with all your online buddies. You'll be able to log on using your existing Facebook credentials to help keep things nice and simple and

the more you use dirtZone the more loyalty points you'll earn.

The more loyalty points you earn, the more great offers from our online partners you'll be able to take advantage of and with enough loyalty points you'll be eligible to enter our competition to win the Twisted 7 prize package. Could it possibly get any better?

Remember, all this is on top of our brand-new websites that will bring you the latest news, greater user interaction, enhanced content, dedicated video and image galleries and a fully-searchable one-stop virtual shopping centre.

The whole shooting match will go live at noon on **May 3** but you will be able to register your interest in dirtZone before then – check in at www.dirtbikerider.com for regular updates...

dirtZone

BACK IN THE DAY!

A RANDOM TRAWL THROUGH THE DIRT BIKE RIDER ARCHIVES



May 1989:

A whole 22 years ago and it's Dobber on the cover throwing out a radical one-handed cross-up for the Box Brownie of Gentleman Jack Burnicle while inside there's a news story describing Pete Mathia – who's still racing today – as an 'old dog'. The cheek! Towards the back there are some geriatric ramblings about quads from an even older dog called Andy Foulkes – some things just never change, eh?



May 2003:

The star of this month's Pro Probe, crazy Dutchman Marc De Reuver graces the cover eight years ago as we ask if the then 20-year-old is the man to put Holland back on the MX map. Elsewhere inside Jonty Edmunds and Geoff Walker test TM and KTM enduro four-poppers and we catch up with the original and still the best FMX bad boy Mad Mike Jones.

To trawl through more back issues of DBR hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and click on the digital vault button – new issues are constantly being added so keep checking back...



THE REVEREND

BAD TIMES!

A BROKEN LEG AND THEN A DEARLY DEPARTED DOG MAKE IT A MISERABLE MONTH FOR THE KTM UK #1...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Sutty

Hi everyone, pretty busy month all round this time. Everyone's season has now kicked off in some way and the cobwebs are slowly disappearing – for some people anyway. From when I last wrote my first race was the opening round of the Maxxis British championship at Little Silver.

Blu, Percy and I left early Saturday morning in the camper so that I could get to the Albion MX shop in Exeter for their open day as it's a very big Fox and KTM dealership. We hung out there for a bit then made our way to the track. When we got there Steve had everything organised. I think he likes going separate to me as I always delay things and I'm always a bit late and make him panic...

The track looked cool when I walked it and I couldn't believe they were watering it! March 6 and they were watering! Hmm, imagine what summer's going to be like! Sunday went okay – it was weird in qualifying doing fast laps that actually count again, such a strange mentality and one that I need to get better at dealing with. Zach's the king of one laps I think so it's good to go against him I guess. I ended up fourth after a Steady Eddy Super Pole lap.

The races were okay too. Race one I had a good third after battling at the end with Tonus although the second race was crap for me even though I got third again. I was half asleep and the Yami boys smoked me which got me down a bit. The last race I was well up for it but hit someone's bars on the start straight and nearly got all twisted up so I had to shut off and came out around mid-pack. I had to avoid a couple of big pile-ups and go off the track so the first two laps were terrible and the sun was low and in my eyes. But I put my head down and charged through to get fifth at the end – man, I hate 20-minute races! I tied for second but lost out on my last race result but it wasn't a bad start to the season.

That next week I took delivery of a KTM 250XC and what a beauty that's proven to be, basically it's a cross between an enduro and a MX bike. I went out on it with Chris Hockey at his secret track which is gnarly + VAT and had a mega blast. It was nice to do something different and I always love riding in the trees. Tom Sagar was there too so it was cool to see how he rides and learn bits and bobs. The Herd and I did a seriously good circuit mid-week and we all just about prolapsed afterwards – it was awesome to do a real tough circuit again as I hadn't done a proper one since I had gone away.

That weekend we drove up the road to Blaxhall for the first Eastern Centre round of the year and also the first run out on the track that I spent heaps of hours revamping over the winter in the bulldozer (which is for hire if anyone is interested – www.4ajcb.com).

Didn't get there till quite late so Percy and I had just enough time to run around and have a look before dark and man had Johnny done a nice job. It was better than most GP tracks look. Next morning everything got under way and the track was so much fun to ride, I didn't want to stop. The racing was good fun, Nunny was riding for a bit of fun on his 350 and then you had all the usual top runners like sideburn Syd Bales, Aston Bird, James Cottrell, Lewi Tombs etc so it was a good line-up for their first round. I think they had 200 riders all in on the day so it was a success.

I had a little bit of drama. I won the first race on my 250F practice bike but it wasn't running right as we were trying a different set-up so good old Steve the Holeshot King got the drop in the Hilux and drove 15 minutes home to pick up the two-stroke XC that was all ready to rock. So I rode the last two races on that and beat all the 450s out the start too. Why three-quarters of the people at local races have 450s I really don't know. It must be so hard for them to enjoy it so why not get a 250SX or 350SX and enjoy it a bit more instead of worrying about having a load of power underneath you. I over-jumped a table top in the second race and landed in a braking bump on the enduro suspension so you can imagine what my wrists felt like the next day.

I waited until Wednesday to ride and Graeme and I went up the FatCats again which was good until I caught my bad ankle. I felt it go and rode into the pits hoping the pain would go away. It didn't so good ole Graeme drove me home and a X-ray showed that I had spiral fractured my fibula again. So I saw my specialist who got me into surgery the next day to have a plate inserted. That all went well but to say I was down over all this would be an understatement. Then three days later I lost my little Jack Russell, Percy. Anyone who knows me knows how much he meant to me – he was chasing a hare across a field and went across a road and got knocked over by a car. My mum did her best but it was too late and he slipped away.

I haven't ever lost anyone before and it's been the hardest thing for me ever. I was down before so it's even worse. I really understand the meaning of the expression that dogs are man's best friend now – I miss him so much. Thankfully I have great friends and family around me. My girl Blu has kept me going through this down time for me, I owe a lot to her. Also seeing the suffering in Japan has put things in perspective.

I'm not going to come back racing until I'm fully fit so it could be six weeks or it could be 10 weeks but I'll be doing my best. Sorry if this was depressing to read but I'm just speaking how I feel.

RIP Perc #45


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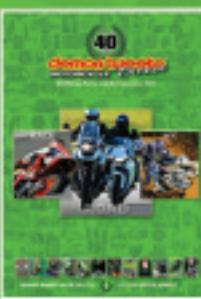
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BLOOD SWEAT AND GEARS

Welcome, race fans, to your monthly Blood, Sweat and Gears column.

First up, I'd like to thank the good people at Freestyle Extreme, FRO Systems, Black Rock Tyres, Suzuki and KTM for loaning us a number of products to help us through our year which we'll be testing and featuring on the show.

Suzuki have lent us a brand new 450 which we'll be putting through its paces throughout the year. I'll bring you regular updates once the series restarts but first impressions are very favourable.

The new race season has finally burst into life and once again our crew are busy capturing all the action on film for you to enjoy from the comfort of your living rooms. And what action it's been. This month we went along to the opening round of the British Trials Championship at Barnsley and caught some truly breath-taking action. Trials riding is something we've not covered on Blood, Sweat and Gears before but it's certainly something we'd like to feature again in the future.

We also rocked up to Sweetwater for the opening round of Paul Edmondson's GBXC cross-country championship where once again a very challenging course was laid out for the competitors. Then it was onto Mallory Park for the British Masters Motocross. This series is now into its 10th year and still going from strength to strength. The highlight for me had to be Brad Anderson jumping over the huge table top, right into the side of Zach Osborne's machine. Our cameras got a great shot of this and fortunately both riders escaped relatively unscathed.

I was struck again by what a good family sport off-roading is. The start of a new championship season is almost like a family reunion with everyone seeming genuinely pleased to see each other and enjoying the chance to catch up on news and gossip and discuss the coming season. As we wandered around the paddock getting our interviews we had a great time chatting with old friends and making new ones.

Talking of family, our young Arley I'm pleased to say has just turned six and loves nothing more than riding his little auto. Indeed, he's taken to the track like a duck to water which has added a whole new dimension to my appreciation of the sport. I've always been aware of youth racing but tended to watch the parents darting around after their little junior with some amusement. Now the shoe is on the other foot as I stand trackside with all the other mums and dads, nervously biting my nails as Arley makes his way around.

But there's nothing more rewarding than watching that huge grin when he takes off his helmet. He's discovering what we already know – that riding a bike off-road is the best feeling in the world.

Until next month, ride safe.

Paul Minihane

BLOOD SWEAT & GEARS will be back on the Extreme Sports Channel (Sky 419/ Virgin 527) soon. Check listings for details.



CROCKSTAR

HEADBANGER!

GORDY TURNS OUT HIS LIGHTS AT CANADA HEIGHTS BUT DESPITE A TRIP TO A&E HE'S IN A GOOD PLACE RIGHT NOW...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Sutty

Now then! People of the Dirt Bike Rider reading world, welcome to a few moments of taking from my column your perception of the stories I tell (WTF? – SL). I must warn you now though, half the lies I tell aren't true. Believe me.

Recently I have been laughing more than crying. It's a good arrangement and thanks to having access to good friends and work colleagues I haven't had to go too far from home to let the good times roll. I like what I do for a living and when I look back over the years of my career it stands out that I perform and operate at my best whenever I'm happy and stressfree in my general daily living.

Some of the stress that we suffer is all brought on by ourselves. I am guilty of that for sure. Whether it is from money or women, it is usually because I've put myself into a position to be exposed to the pain and stress that comes from losing either of those two desirable assets. The best way to protect yourself and safeguard your well-being is to not have anything to lose. So, I have got rid of all my women and given all my money away. Simple! Now I'm in a position where I've nothing to lose!

Now...to continue my life coach lecture, I'm not stating that I follow the mindset of 'if you're not in the game you can't lose'. I'm in the game, that's a fact. Probably due to the inconvenient reality that the hungry must be fed. However, let's just say I'm a different player for now. And that is NOT some sort of hint of an announcement that I am gay. I am so NOT gay. I love women in the most non gay way you can imagine.

Moving on... My point is I'm happy and I believe that is a really important foundation to any formula for success. My bike, mechanic and team are pleasing me of late. I have no complaints and they have all exceeded my expectations. Our products are the best available and I feel very confident that we are well-equipped and prepared.

Little Silver and Canada Heights were rounds one and two of the Maxxis British championship. I'm frustrated by the race positions but realistic of why and I am working to improve the race day results. Canada Heights was about to be the beginning of that in race two but I failed to deliver due to a crash. I got knocked out and hurt my neck. The medics thought I'd broken my

neck so they took every precaution to protect me. Off to hospital for x-rays proved that I had no broken bones. I was so relieved. I decided while lying in the hospital bed that if I had broken my neck that I was for sure going to retire from professional racing.

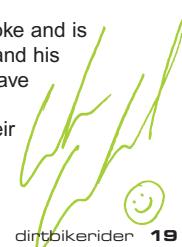
I tried to keep any injury reports reaching my mother. Since I was almost killed at Hawkstone in a start straight smash in 2009 my mum and dad stay away from bikes and we don't discuss my races. I was more worried about my mum hearing I was in A&E with a suspected broken neck than anything. In the end she had a nosy on the mylaps website to see how I'd got on in the races and she read the race was red-flagged because of me. It was fine in the end as I was okay. Concussion was present and I suffered whiplash, cuts and bruises. All okay though...

Other news, I'm defending myself and the continuation of my practice track due to a complaining neighbour. I took the time some years ago to obtain the necessary planning permission and legal rights to use the practice track as I need it. I have had the field as a practice track for 23 years and respect the surrounding neighbours by considering unwelcome nuisance noise.

I have been trials riding a little and will do more as I find the time to do so. I introduced a close friend to bike riding and hope to see him continue to improve. I taught him first on the trials bike and then progressed onto a 250F MX bike. He did really well, blisters and bruises the only negative. His riding style is identical to how he rode his BMX when we were at school. Grasshopper legs I nicknamed him back then.

I'm still running plenty and look forward to summer events and I have a couple of workshop projects moving forward, one being a retro/evo 1990 CR500 build. I have a Yamaha TY250 pinkie trials bike to do too. These are all bikes very sentimental to me. They are way at the back of the priority list but I'll chip away at them and one day they'll be done.

My friend Stuart Bell had a stroke and is recovering in hospital. I wish him and his family all the best. Other friends have got engaged, pregnant, divorced, beat up, bankrupt or expanded their business. Well done to you all, I wish you nothing but the best. As long as I'm happy!



WIN! WIN! WIN!

SMUGGLING DUDS BOXERS UP FOR GRABS

Are you wearing clean underpants? You could get run over! How many of us were packed off to school as nippers with mummy's words of warning ringing in our ears? And even now, many years later, card-carrying members of Team DBR won't even consider stepping off the pavement unless they're prepared to let a hot casually nurse see them in their skimpies...

Well, since we took a delivery of **Smuggling Duds** the Green Cross Code's gone out the window. With our frank n' beans safely stowed in the coolest boxers on the planet we've become downright desperate to flash those A&E angels our pimped-out packages. And who can blame us? After all, **Smuggling Duds** are the smalls of choice for top racers **Billy MacKenzie** and this month's cover star **Jason Dougan** so we're talking fashion cutting edge for your meat n' two veg...

Featuring a discreet pocket to discreetly hold things you need to be discreet about (a packet of nodders, say, or even a short course of penicillin), Smuggling Duds will win you admiring glances wherever and whenever you choose to drop your trousers and, what's more, we've got **10 pairs** up for grabs for one lucky reader!

To win 'em – plus a **signed Billy MacKenzie** race shirt – all we want to know is what make of bike does the speedy Scot race Down Under.

Is it:

- A:** Yamaha
- B:** Kawasaki
- C:** CCM
- D:** Honda

Think you know? Okay, log onto www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smartphone to scan the **QR code** that'll transport you to our home page. Once there click on the competitions link, fill in the fields and hit transmit. The competition closes on **May 12** with the first correct answer chosen at random after this date winning **10 pairs** of Smuggling Duds boxers plus **Billy's signed shirt** (provided The Bear hasn't guzzled it all in the meantime).



BNZ 11



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SWORDY

DETERMINATION!

THE DOUBLE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF LITTLE SILVER AND HAWKSTONE ONLY SERVE TO MAKE SWORDY DIG EVEN DEEPER...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutty

It's been a pretty crazy month with it all starting down in sunny Devon at Little Silver. Yep, round one of the British was finally upon us. This was the race I had been training all winter for, all those miles in the cold and rain on my bicycle and all those laps I had put in on the CCM. It was time to see how ready everyone really was...

The track was in perfect condition, much faster and drier than it was in 2010. I woke up that morning and in my head I was going for the win although I wouldn't be too disappointed with a podium. It never crossed my mind or anyone else's in the team that I would start with two DNFs.

I have to say it was a shock and not the start anyone wants at the first round. I was riding good all day and felt strong on the bike so that was a positive. In the third race I only had one thing on my mind and that was to win – second would not be good enough. I won the race and got the 25 points I needed. Without the two DNFs it would have been such a different day but this is motocross and anything can happen.

The next race I had was the Hawkstone Park International. I always try to do this race as it's good to get race time. I went up on the Sunday morning but from the moment I woke up I knew I wasn't right. I had such a bad stomach all night and turning up to be told how sh*t I looked really wasn't the start I wanted! I felt I was riding fast but couldn't ride at all by the last race due to feeling so ill. It really annoyed me as I knew I could have done well normally.

Jodie and I went for a scan to check the baby – she has to be scanned every two weeks and all is great and the baby is growing perfectly. We even found out the sex but it's top secret until August! Ayrton is getting excited about having a little brother or sister although when we told him to come and feel the baby kick he jumped up and kicked Jodie's stomach. We had to laugh as he thought that was what we meant – luckily it was not hard. Let the fighting begin!

I have been focusing on my training off the bike and have been doing a lot of swimming. After I finish my laps I take Ayrton which is mega as he loves the water. He is such a water baby



and can swim on his own with armbands. He dives in into the deep end and swims all on his own. The only problem is he still hasn't understood danger so would happily do it with no armbands!

I was really looking forward to racing at Canada Heights, especially with what happened at Little Silver. I watched it on TV and that was good as it really pissed me off so I wanted it even more than ever. The first race I got off to an okay start but was not happy as I didn't win. I got out the gate fifth, came through to second and was closing in on Simpson and by the end of the race I was fighting to pass him but a few backmarkers stopped me on the last lap so second it would be.

The second race had to be red flagged as Pourcel had a nasty crash. Once it restarted I took the holeshot and was gone, pulling an eight-second lead. I was riding well and felt smooth then I made a stupid mistake which ended in a massive crash. Thankfully I wasn't hurt but by the time I got back up I just had to put my head down and do what I could but the damage had been done. I ended up 10th as it was red flagged once again.

As for the last race, I gated fourth around the first corner so had to work my way up again, got into second and once again came close to passing Simpson. Overall on the day I got third so considering how bad race two was I was pleased to be on the podium.

On a lighter note, it's Ayrton's second birthday this month so he's having a massive party and Jodie has invited 30 children! It's going to be hell but I think Ayrton will love it. He is getting an outside playhouse – I have to do the base as it cannot sit on grass. More labour! I have also been told I have to fence off part of the garden and make it into Ayrton's play area. God it never gets easier but now the missus is pregnant I would have to have a death wish if I complained so my spare time is taken care of!

Anyway, that's it for this month – let's hope next month is a good one...

Braaaaaaaaap #2

Stephen Sword
dirtbikerider 21



BEES AND BIRDS!

THE MD RACING NATIONAL TWO-STROKE, VETS AND LADIES CHAMPIONSHIP KICKS OFF IN YORKSHIRE

Words and photos by **Sutty**

International model, twinshock legend, race promoter, motocross fan – if you don't already know who Darren Hudson is then you probably should. While the Cumbrian builder is all of those things and undoubtedly a lot more, the one thing that moulds him most in life is that love of motocross – if he didn't have that then he'd simply be a Cumbrian builder, eh?

The MD Racing National Two-stroke, Vets and Ladies championship is Darren's baby and because it caters for the niche markets in motocross needs plenty of nurturing as it finds its feet. After a frustratingly slow start in its inaugural year the series seems to be picking up this time around which is awesome news as it offers racers who haven't necessarily got the budget to hand over a megabucks registration fee the opportunity to chase a national title no matter who they are or what they choose to ride.

The action out on the FatCat track is sweet as a nut and after years of being deafened by four-bangers it's actually

nice to hear a full line-up of two-smokers buzzing around the track especially when there's a rider of Jack Brunell's calibre showing everyone how it's done. The FWSX SX2 champ dominates proceedings in the MX2 and 125 two-stroke classes over the weekend to leave with a healthy lead in both championships.

Other overall winners include silky smooth Alex Rach (250 two-stroke), former British champs contender Alex Butler (MX1), old man David Dunn (Vets) and the ever charming Stacey Fisher who kicks some ass in the Ladies' class.

If you want to get in on the action – and believe me if you like bar-to-bar racing out on the track and a laugh with new and old mates off it then you will – get yourself booked in for round two of the series which runs at Hawkstone Park on the weekend of May 1/2. For more info on the series log on to www.2strokevetsandladiesmx.co.uk or call Cumbria's premier Russ Abbott lookalike – that's Darren Hudson by the way – on 07774 894534.

Carl Brogden grabs the holeshot at the start of Sunday's first 250 2T moto



RESULTS

125 2T

1	Jack Brunell	238
2	Nathan Rooks	226
3	Jamie Collins	218

250 2T

1	Alex Rach	232
2	Jamie Jackson	230
3	Brett Hillman	204

500 2T

1	Craig Marsden	230
2	Barry Turnbull	118
3	Jason Martin	116

LADIES

1	Stacey Fisher	234
2	Kerry Wilson	230
3	Amy Goodland	220

VETERANS

1	Dave Dunn	238
2	Richard Brown	224
3	Peter Taylor	212

MX1

1	Alex Butler	240
2	Hayden Wilkinson	224
3	Luke Dowsing	208

MX2

1	Jack Brunell	240
2	John Hawkins	228
3	Adam Pierce	206



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Christophe Pourcel



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Andrew Short (part of Team USA) winners of MXoN 2010

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MARC DE REUVER

ALL REPAIRED AND REVVED UP FOR THE NEW SEASON, WE CHECK IN WITH EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE FLYING DUTCHMAN...

Interview and photo by JP O'Connell

Q: How do you pronounce your surname? In England we rhyme it with 'Hoover' but isn't it 'Roy-ver'?

Toby Wright, IOW

A: "Neither one. It's difficult to explain because the 'eu' of Reuver is a special sound in the Dutch language. But I understand both of them. No problem!"

Q: If you were unable to secure a GP ride would you continue at national level?

Simon Timms, Oxford

A: "Of course I will. Motocross is my passion and my life. I will ride a motorcycle till I drop..."

Q: How long have you been a Red Bull athlete and how did that deal come about?

Carl Toop, Wrexham

A: "I was Red Bull athlete from 2003 until 2010. For 2011 they will quit with me. The reason is that I am 'too old'. Little easy to say if you ask me but they gave me a very, very good time and I want to thank them for that!"

Q: After your fantastic rides at the '04 des Nations how annoying do you find it that the Netherlands doesn't even field a team anymore?

Chris Ellis, Dorset

A: "What can I say? I had a lot of problems with the federation in the past but I just go with their decisions on the moment. You know, maybe I will need them in the future. When you are young and cocky you don't think about those things. But daddy is getting older!"

Q: Which of the sand tracks is your favourite and why?

Kevin Grieve, Gillingham

A: "Lierop. That track flows. A track like Lommel I really don't like for example. But it's sand so I can find my way there. But Lierop is old-school. Love that. Same for Hawkstone. Awesome track. Crowd close to the track. I wanna see the emotions on the people's faces. That motivates me. When you ride at Donington you sometimes have the feeling you are all by yourself on the track."

Q: What do you need to change to get yourself back up the results table and, hopefully, back on a factory team?

Scott Parker, Melksham

A: "Podiums and wins. That is clear. I battled with those guys before. I remember Cairoli was not even qualifying on some GPs and I was winning! Not that I have to beat Cairoli this year – second is okay for me too ha ha ha..."

Q: After breaking your back a couple of years ago did you consider retiring at all?

Sarah Moxley, Southborough

A: "I had a lot of moments like that. I have dislocated

both hips, broke my back in three places, a hernia, broke my neck, had brain bleedings and did both my knees. I had some moments to think about it but I will continue!"

Q: After so many big injuries do you find yourself still able to hang it out as much as you used to?

Hugh Burdis, Northwich

A: "Good question. Last year is a good example. I was sh**ting my pants on some GPs. When I walked the track on Friday I was standing on jumps with the thought 'hey, I don't want to crash here because maybe this or that could happen'. I always thought that would never happen to me but it did. Strange feeling. But at the moment I feel a little the same mind as 2004 when I was battling Ben Townley."

Q: Where do you go if you want to practice on a hardpack track?

Matt Jones, Letchworth

A: "Sometimes to northern France or I go to Genk. In January we always go to Spain or something."

Q: I remember watching you giving a few of the Yanks a lesson at Southwick back in '08 – do you have any plans to do anything like that again?

Martin Turpin, Glasgow

A: "Hmm, I have to be fit like that again. I didn't finish the second heat in Southwick. It was burning hot there for me. Like they were standing with a hairdryer in my helmet all the time. Those Americans still looked really fit. Was pretty amazing because there was nothing wrong with my physical condition – two weeks before I almost won the GP in Lommel and the week before I won a Belgium championship on the Keiheuvel in Balen. That track is more heavy than Lommel."

Q: You've ridden pretty much every bike brand at GP level – which of those bikes stands out as your favourite?

Ian Huckle, Maesteg

A: "The 2008 Honda of Martin Racing. You can compare that to a Rolls Royce I think. I only need the umbrella in the sofa!"

Q: Does your new deal with Van Beers Yamaha include a full season of GPs?

John Wilson, Hemel Hempstead

A: "Man, I will race all GPs."

Q: How much of a blow to your confidence was it when Rinaldi Yamaha terminated your three-year contract after only a few months?

Craig Cooper, Neath

A: "That was real bummer. You know, we went practising in Asti in Italy and I missed a bump and sort of cracked my back. It hurt a bit but not really something bad. But the pain stayed there so I went for X-rays. I had a hernia. What to do next? We talked with the Yamaha staff and we had two options. Operation and three months out or three big cortisone injections. You have to see it like they want to kill a mosquito with an elephant. It doesn't even work sometimes. So it didn't work with me clearly."

"I had to stop my running, after that cycling and bike riding during the week was out of the question. So the 450 started to ride with me instead me riding the bike. Big, big crashes were the result. Broke five helmets in 2007. I heard already rumours that they wanted to contract Philippaerts so I asked them. This was not true they said. They wanted to keep me. Okay, all good. Then on one day I had to come to the head office of Yamaha at Amsterdam Airport. I was finished. I was like what? Coppins was already out with his shoulder injury and the GP of Namur came up. Important race for them. I didn't qualify. Stupid thing to do of course but I was so angry."

"I won the last heat of the year in Lierop beating the fittest rider at the moment who was Kevin Strijbos. I was weighing 90kg (78 now) and had the physic of a snail but I did it on adrenaline!"

Q: What do you do as regards physical training during the off-season and do you have a personal trainer?

Julian Morgan, Devizes

A: "Off-season training is more endurance on a low heart rate. Running for 45 to 60 minutes or cycling one hour and 30 minutes. Also some power training in the fitness. I am riding 12 years GPs now. This year I will do my own thing. I know what I have to do to get fit."

Q: Having had factory rides for most of your career how difficult is it adapting to being on smaller budget teams and, presumably, smaller pay cheques?

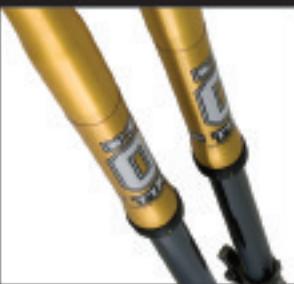
Daniel Williams, Frome

A: "Well the bike isn't the biggest problem. They don't make bad standard 450 bikes anymore. Some small changes make a big difference and then with some good suspension is all you need. The biggest problem is the small pay cheques ha ha ha!"

NEXT MONTH BEN TOWNLEY >>

Got a question for the former MX2 world champ who is returning to GP action this year after a stint Stateside? Then fire it across to the Kiwi care of dbrprobe@googlemail.com

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GEICO BLASTERS!

THIS MONTH WE'RE UNDER THE GEICO HONDA AWNING AS BLAKE WHARTON AND JUSTIN BARCIA BARE THEIR SOULS TO THE DBR FAITHFUL...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Steve Cox

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

BW: "Probably Johnny Depp."

JB: "Owen Wilson."

DBR: What was the last lie you told and who was it to?

BW: "I do my best not to lie ever so I really can't remember."

JB: "I don't tell lies."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

BW: "I don't even know what that is so nope."

JB: "Definitely no."

DBR: Something you eat that you know you probably shouldn't?

BW: "I have a sweet tooth and really like Mexican candy but I don't eat them too often."

JB: "Ice cream."

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel, do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

BW: "Uh, I'd say you have to do what you have to do to get the win sometimes."

JB: "If it was for the championship then probably."

DBR: What's your least favourite part of a supercross track?

BW: "I guess it depends on the track."

JB: "I don't really have a least favourite part – I like it all."

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas?

BW: "Not right now."

JB: "Yep, Coca Cola ones..."

DBR: What has been the highlight of your career so far?

BW: "St Louis SX win in 2009."

JB: "Glen Helen was my first race ever and I had a great time."

DBR: What car do you drive?

BW: "Red Ford F250 pick-up truck."

JB: "Toyota Tacoma."

DBR: Okay, so what would you drive if money was no object?

BW: "Red Ford F250 pick-up truck..."

JB: "Lamborghini!"

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

BW: "Never."

JB: "No, never."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

BW: "I wouldn't want to change anything really. There's always something to change on people but if we did change then it would take away everyone's differences and that's what makes the world different."

JB: "I like who I am, I wouldn't want to change anything."

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

BW: "The singer from Soundgarden because I like music and they're probably my favourite music."

JB: "Michael Jordan."

DBR: If you could have any superpower for a week what would it be?

BW: "I would want to be a super-powerful angel. I want to be able to destroy all the bad in everyone."

JB: "I'd like to fly, that would be pretty cool."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

BW: "If it's bare minimum I'd say guitar, water and food but if it had water and food I'd have drums, guitar and my bible."

JB: "Water, phone and a woman."

DBR: Favourite race you've been in?

BW: "St. Louis 2009, it's where I earned my first win."

JB: "Tonight was pretty cool, I really enjoyed Indy it was a killer race."

DBR: Be honest, how often do you Google yourself?

BW: "I did it twice last year."

JB: "I wouldn't say more than five times a year."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

BW: "Brunette, easily."

JB: "I have to say blonde."

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

BW: "Winning is great. It kinda depends what you're winning and who you're with."

JB: "Yes."

DBR: One thing about your riding style you'd like to improve?

BW: "I am who I am and I'm comfortable with that. I learn each time I get on the bike so I can say I'm always improving upon my riding style."

JB: "I can't really say anything, I am comfortable with how I ride."

DBR: What's your favourite film?

BW: "Cable Guy!"

JB: "The Hangover!"

DBR: What's your most annoying habit?

BW: "I drum on the table and I'm very indecisive when it comes to ordering food."

JB: "Chewing gum in people's ears. I get yelled at all the time."

DBR: If the opportunity arose would you like to try a season of GPs?

BW: "Absolutely, in a heart beat."

JB: "Oh yeah, that would be sick."

DBR: What has been the worst MX-related decision you've made during your career?

BW: "It's easy to look back and say this and that but I've made decisions and learned from them so I can't say any of them were bad."

JB: "I haven't been a professional for very long – I made some crazy moves my rookie year but I won't call them mistakes because I learned."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

BW: "The world just isn't ready to know so I can't share."

JB: "I can't share or else then people would know!"



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**Stuart Edmunds upholds
Irish honour on his TM**



GOOD TIMES, BAD TIMES!

MARTY, GRAEME AND STUEY 162EY HAVE MADE POSITIVE STARTS BUT GORDY RINGS HIS BELL IN KENT AND THINGS ARE EVEN WORSE FOR BIG PHIL

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Sutty

The Hawkstone International results had my tail wagging like a Dulux puppy. Martin Barr and Graeme Irwin's pace in qualification must have sent shivers down the spine of the top British championship contenders and Martin's subsequent chasing down of ex world champion Steve Ramon in the first moto was an amazing performance.

Martin took the battle for third place to the factory Suzuki star but just when it looked like Ramon was running out of answers for the Ulsterman, Marty's KTM stepped out and threw him over the bars to end his challenge and race. Graeme kept both the Emerald Isle and KTM to the forefront, posting a strong sixth place in front of Stephen Sword and Jason Dougan.

Second time out and Martin nailed the holeshot and mixed it up with the regular GP racers, following home Shaun Simpson's LS Honda for a fine fifth place and sending notice of his GP aspirations as Graeme picked himself up off the ground to post a respectable 10th place.

The early season has already dealt a severe body blow and indeed a gut-wrenching KO to the most anticipated comeback in Irish motocross. Philip McCullough's return to racing has been torpedoed completely out of the water by a serious knee injury. Phil sustained this injury just after Christmas and in typical McC fashion initially refused to accept the inevitable, continuing his training schedule until even he had to call it quits. Another year on the sidelines

could very well spell the end – full stop – for the elder statesman. Then again, the man does not generally conform – full stop!

When we received confirmation of Philip's news, Blarney had already mentally penned the opening paragraph of this month's offering with the news that defending Ulster MX1/MX2 champion Robert Hamilton had fallen victim to the March Hare Motocross at Donemana, breaking his wrist in a nasty crash. Word is that the Hamstar will sit out at least the first round of both the Ulster and Irish championships which, with the Ulster being only a six-round series, must cast a dark shadow over a successful defence for the G&G Ross racer. Then again, it's motocross we're talking about and Hammy is a proven race winner time and time again. With wins come points, add in a few DNFs from the competition and it's game back on!

Tommy Merton won both motos aboard his Watt Kawasaki while a surprise pair of second places by Michael McCammond aboard the JAR Racing Honda will have given confidence to the ever-smiling youngster.

As predicted the Irish Armada made their presence well and truly felt at Little Silver at the opening round of the Maxxis series – okay, so we didn't get a podium but it's on the cards. Ulstermen Graeme Irwin and Gordon Crockard put in a solid day's work with sixth and seventh overall finishes and Graeme's baptism in the premier MX1 series was to say the least

encouraging, despite carrying an excessive dose of man flu.

Wayne Garrett put his best foot forward posting a 14-13-15 card on his first competitive outing on Darren Wilson's Rockstar KTM and the Comber-based lad was a happy camper when we spoke as he made the return journey from Devon.

Just three weeks later the Maxxis series had moved east into Kent to the famous Canada Heights circuit for round two where Marty was best of the Irish, finishing seventh overall in MX1 on his Proppa.com 350 KTM with a 7-6-10 card. Graeme snuck into the top 10 with three consistent races but the lights went out for the Crock Star in a second moto that had already been restarted after wildcard Seb Pourcel slung himself down the track.

The red flags came out again as GC was unconscious but he recovered quickly and was last heard disagreeing with a medic about the need for him to attend hospital.

Down in MX2 Stuart Edmunds ended the day in ninth overall, the TM man starting strongly with an eighth in the opener. Stuey 162ey then slipped back with 10th and 13th-placed finishes but there's still plenty of cause for optimism right there.

Okay, that's me done for another month – tune in next time for another instalment of baloney, sorry, Blarney!

Stevie
dirtbikerider 29

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Jamie McCann is typical of the motivated young riders starting to emerge

LOOKING GOOD!

WITH A STEADY INFLUX OF HUNGRY YOUNG RIDERS INTO THE WORLD OF ENDURO THE FUTURE'S LOOKING BRIGHT FOR OFF-ROAD RACING...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

Studying the start list for any given round of the Enduro World Championship isn't something I normally spend too much time doing. Honestly, I can't remember the last time I gave one more than a quick glance. But when the latest start list appeared in my inbox I decided a closer look might be the right thing to do, just to get the lie of the land ahead of the season opener...

Scrolling down through the four-page document there wasn't too much that caught my eye as far as the Enduro 1 class was concerned. It's the experience of seven-time world champ Juha Salminen versus a lot of fast and hungry youngsters in the 250F category. Enduro 2 is full of plenty of big names and looks set to be a thriller with the most notable newcomer Estonian motocross racer Aigar Leok who's giving the woods game a go for 2011. Meanwhile, it's the Enduro 3 class where British interest lies as Knighter takes on Ahola and a plethora of two-stroke mounted chargers.

It was actually the Enduro Junior class that caught my eye. Not so much because it's 'stacked' with big-name riders – it is the junior category after all – but because it has no fewer than 61 riders entered. That's close to the total entered into the E1, E2 and E3 classes combined!

It's no secret that the opening race of the season always attracts a larger than normal entry. And with this year's being just north of Barcelona it's a very accessible event for all concerned. But 61 riders takes some believing. Riders from just about every European country

are represented with some from much further afield making it an interesting and likely exciting class to keep an eye on.

So what? Well, if nothing else it shows that there is plenty of interest in enduro from Europe's yoofs. While the European Enduro Championship has long attracted a strong youth element, the number of under 23s in the world champs has fluctuated between good, poor and now very strong indeed. How many will compete in more than just a few events this season is yet to be seen and the number that will go on and regularly compete in the senior classes of the EWC is another thing altogether – but for now things look good.

Things also look good in the UK. Very good in fact. Whereas in the past it's not always been clear where the British Enduro Championship stars of tomorrow will come from, with just one BEC and four rounds of the Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Enduro Championship so far run it's clear for all to see that there's a plentiful supply of talent emerging in our green and pleasant land.

Getting youngsters interested in enduro sport isn't the easiest thing in the world but it's great to see that there are plenty of late teen and early 20-somethings taking up the challenge of the woods game today. Once the preserve of the more mature rider, enduro – like all sports – won't prosper if there's not a constant flow of enthusiastic and passionate newcomers streaming into it.

The most encouraging thing as far as the UK enduro scene is concerned is that as well as a

high number of extremely fast Under 23 class riders, the next generation of starlets is eagerly waiting in the wings with many already showing their pedigree in the Under 19 class of the BSEC.

One thing I'm confident of is that Great Britain will enjoy increased success at the International Six Days Enduro in the years ahead. Getting into the Junior Trophy Team will be as difficult, if not more difficult, than securing a slot in the Trophy Team this year and likely in coming years too.

For the last few years there's not been too many young riders stepping forward and showing that they have what it takes to mix it with European rivals. The likes of Daryl Bolter, Si Wakely and Greg Evans have all secured European titles and hats off to them for doing so but it's been a case of one rider reaching the top in any given year, then a wait of a couple of years before they're replaced. It's a cycle we need to speed up.

With the right backing, encouragement and with time to settle into international level competition it's not an unthinkable proposition that riders from the UK could soon be lifting one, two, maybe even more, titles in a single season. And delivering solid Junior Trophy results at the ISDE as well.

What'll hold many of them back is funding – not having the finances to match their talents – but if raw talent alone is an indication of what some of these young British riders might achieve things are looking good for enduro sport in the UK...



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Contact: 01327 301901



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Price: Tees £26 Fleece £46
Supplier: foxeurope.com
Contact: 0191 487 6100



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SILVER BULLET!

Defending MX2 British champ Zach Osborne lines up behind the inside gate for the first championship race of the year at Little Silver. The American's notoriously hard on his hardware and won the opening two motos before his Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yam went pop in the third but boy was he hauling when it happened...





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IT'S A DOOGS' LIFE!

THE YOUNGEST RIDER TO WIN A BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND WHEN HE CAME GOOD AT CULHAM IN 2003, JASON DOUGAN'S A COMPLEX CHARACTER WHO'S NEVER FULFILLED HIS FULL POTENTIAL. NOW, AFTER TAKING A YEAR OUT OF GPS TO REGROUP, HE'S BACK WHERE IT ALL BEGAN AND – AS HE EXPLAINS TO FORMER TEAM-MATE JEFF PERRETT – RELISHING HIS RACING AGAIN...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Sutty and Nuno Laranjeira

Back in 2003 Jason Dougan became the youngest rider to win a round of the British championship. Since then – much to his frustration – he's yet to build on that early promise. So will 2011 be the year Doogs really finds his feet?

They say you have to watch the quiet ones don't they? Well with Jason Dougan that certainly rings true. Those who know the real Dougan will know what I'm talking about when I say the man really is one of the funniest, quirkiest people in our sport. He's certainly kept me smiling and entertained over the years I've known him.

I first noticed Doogs when I was struggling to qualify at a British championship round at Canada Heights back in 2002. I was trying to squeeze everything I could out of my 125cc Kawasaki knowing that something had gone wrong with the motor in the opening warm-up laps and we had no time to fix it. With the clock ticking down I noticed his name towards the bottom of the qualifying screen with me but had no idea who he was. Within moments I was behind him and I saw him again a little later as we both waited in the pit box for the non-qualifiers race!

I spoke to him before our race and he was a shy, spotty little Herbert who looked like he was on the verge of tears. He hardly said a word

back to me and just got through the conversation with the minimum of one word answers possible but there was something about the kid I liked and it was the start of a friendship that I value highly. I've got a lot of time for Doogs and I'm sure most people who know him will tell you the same.

His early potential may not have been obvious – mainly because he didn't come through the UK youth scene – but since that day Doogs has been battling away, doing his best to carve out a pro career and although it's had its moments it hasn't quite delivered everything he believes it can.

Now he's back to where it all started for him in the pros with Steve Dixon's Bike It Cosworth Yamaha team, Jason has the chance to show people his true potential. It's like starting over again to a degree because last year he took time out of GPs and he believes he starts 2011 a better person and rider for it.

"Last year was my biggest learning year ever. I thought I was taking a step back by not doing the GPs after doing them for five years in a row but last year was exactly what I needed to realise what I needed to change and improve on to take it up a level. I learned what I need to do to get the best out of my ability. For the first time in ages – probably since I'd been racing in the adults – I never put pressure on myself as much as I had before." >>



profile

A relaxed Doogs went out and blitzed the field in the opening Maxxis MX1 moto of the year at Little Silver





"Like if I went riding in the week and I didn't feel good I wouldn't force myself to do motos like I normally would or if I woke up and I didn't feel that great I wouldn't force myself to do anything over-strenuous. Before it would sometimes feel like a chore and I wouldn't feel good after. Last year I did what I wanted to do and what made me happy and wasn't so rigid in my approach. Nobody told me to do that, I just felt like I had to do it that way and I'm glad I did. It works for me and that's all that matters."

Going back to ride for Steve Dixon seems a good fit for all concerned right now. Jason still lives in Portsmouth and is not too far from Steve's workshop and over the past few years has built up a tight friendship with Zach Osborne. So when Steve asked him back into the fold as the team's MX1 GP rider rather than a satellite rider operating with backing from Phoenix Tools it was an offer Doogs couldn't resist.

"Obviously, at times last year I showed that I had good speed and Steve was looking for someone to go back into GP racing in the MX1 again so he approached me and asked me if I was up for it. After the year I had and what I learned about myself last year it was a no-brainer. I had other deals on the table to do the British championship and the Red Bull Pro Nationals that were pretty much as good a deal as I have with Steve to do the GPs but I feel like I'm ready to do GPs again, to get where I want to be with my career."

"If I stayed racing in the UK only for another year I don't think I'd progress. I did by doing that

last year but that was the refresher I needed and now I feel I'm in a much healthier position in my mind. I'm not going to deny the fact that I would like to be world champion but at the same time in the near future I'd like to focus on more realistic goals that will get me closer. If I ride the way I can and everything goes to plan I don't see why I can't finish in the top 10 in the MX1 world championship this year."

"In saying that, what I've learned last year is if I don't get those kind of results at a GP not to beat myself up over it and instead learn and build from it because I know I'm good enough to get those results. I have no intention of going to America, Australia or anything like that because I'm not content with what I've done in the GPs so far. I want to win a British championship too."

"All's good at the moment. I'm living at home so no pressure's there, no girlfriend, no kids – that I know off anyway – and my focus is on racing and enjoying my racing so I think I'm in a good place right now. I feel you've got to have a life outside motocross and I have and that's what helps me relax."

Although he struggled in his early professional career the UK scene was forced to sit up and take notice at the British championship round at Culham in 2003. Still looking much younger than his 16 years he rode a blinder and found himself on top of the podium at the end of the day. Did he really believe in his heart of hearts he'd find himself in that position as young as he did?

"Erm...no, definitely not! I didn't really know

what to expect that whole year. It was only my second year in the adults and the British championships. I only qualified at the last round the year before so it wasn't as if I had loads of racing experience at that level. I got a sixth at the first round and it just went better and better from there and at the age I was and still with a lot of people not knowing much about me I think it was as unexpected for them as it was me."

"When I was that age I was so shy and quiet I never used to talk to anyone. Mark Chamberlain and the team used to take the p**s out of me calling me a mute and stuff like that. All I wanted to do was ride my bike and keep myself to myself – I kinda like my own company and when you're on your bike that's all you've got really. I'd turn up to the British championships, get changed into my kit early, stay in my kit all day, wouldn't hardly eat anything. I just wanted to get out and ride my bike – that's all I used to do."

"Because I was so young I never actually took on board what had just happened. Everyone around me was making a fuss. It wasn't until three or four days later that I realised what I'd done and the significance of it. It felt good but it never really changed anything for me and I never really took it on board."

If Doogs never really took it on board his Motovision racing team certainly did. It was a huge moment for the then new team. They had put their faith in Dougan and although the team was new their personal relationship wasn't. Mark Chamberlain had recognised Doogs' talent early on and after witnessing Jason's >>

FRENCH CONNECTION!

JUNIOR JASE...

"When I was on the 60s or even the 80s I wasn't good. I never won any races of note – I might win local races but that was about it, when I'd race at a national I'd get smoked! So I never really expected to be where I am now when I was younger. I never was one of those riders that thought or told themselves and everyone else who wanted to hear that I was going to be a world champion.

"We started doing a few more nationals in the UK but I never really enjoyed the tracks or the whole atmosphere. It felt all a bit too serious, like almost every kid that was there, their parents thought they were going to be the next big thing. It just seemed like such a load of bulls**t really and my dad got sick of it and wanted to do something different.

"He met a French guy at work and he started to speak to him and asked him to break the language barrier and get us into some French races. We live in Portsmouth so it was easy to get to northern France and closer than some UK races. I got my licence and started racing a local championship out there and I ended up winning that so the following year I moved onto the main French youth championship. Before I knew it I was winning races and battling with Christophe Pourcel and Nicolas Aubin and it was then I realised that I could be good.

"I don't know if it's made me a better rider but it definitely brought on my ability quicker and gave me more confidence because I enjoyed riding out there. I enjoyed people not knowing who I was and being the only English kid and working my way up to the top without the pressure or expectancy that I think you get at home. Everyone here in the UK seems to be a little too serious at youth level I think. Don't get me wrong, it's good to do well and win but if you're going to get anywhere in motocross it only really matters when you turn pro. That's when it has to get more serious because it's a job and like any job you have to perform. That's why me and my dad were happy to get away from the whole British scene."

As much as Doogs has no regrets about doing his motocross education in France it may explain why he took a little while longer to adapt to the pressures of professional racing. All that expectancy that some of the UK-based riders start to feel as they come through he didn't. So did he feel the extra pressure when he got the gig with Steve's team and jumped in at the deep end?

"Yeah, I did, I think mainly because of who I am but also because I hadn't felt it all through my youth career. Just before I first signed for Dixon I did one race back in Britain and that was to qualify for the mini world championships for Great Britain. The race was up near Rugby and I came in and pretty much wiped the floor with everyone and people kind of remembered that once I signed for Dixon – just like that there was hype going about that I was going to be the next Billy MacKenzie for Steve.

"I never started believing the hype and noise about me but I definitely put too much pressure on myself to justify it. I had a few injuries as well which didn't help – I broke my collarbone twice and just never rode how I should've.

"There was no pressure from Steve or anyone on the team. Everyone knew I was really young and appreciated how difficult the British championship is and that I'd never raced any other adult races before. It was just me, the pressure I put on myself. To the point I never even realised I was doing it so that's why I couldn't help it or do something about it. I would go to the races and feel like I was riding fast but I was actually that nervous I didn't realise that I was riding terrible. I would go practising and turn really good times alongside Billy but then when I got to the race I'd be miles off the pace but still feel like I was riding like I was in the week. Then it started to get frustrating."

A four-year-old Doogs complete with caped crusader kit...



Jason had an off day at the Hawkstone International but one week later was right back on it at Canada Heights





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DOOGS ON...

BEING A LUNATIC

"I don't know, I like to keep my friends close. People who I like know exactly who I am and what I'm like but I don't open myself up and be myself in front of everyone. People who don't know me don't get to see that side of me and I don't feel like they should. People can take it as arrogance or however they like but the people who know me know it's nothing like that at all."

"People who I have ended up being friends with have often said 'I never thought you'd be the way you are' so I think some people get the wrong impression of me. Nine or 10 years in the game has taught me that when you're doing well everyone wants to be your friend, as soon as you have an off day or whatever you soon find out who your real friends are."

EVEN BIGGER LUNATICS

"Oh, tough one that. Billy MacKenzie?"

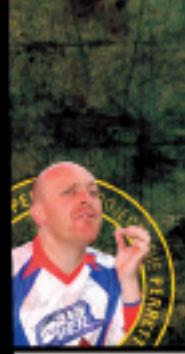
Actually, no, probably Higgsy [Jason Higgs] and Jonesy [Mark Jones] top him. I can't even begin to explain the madness they bring. All three together is a danger to society. We've had some amazing times that none of us and probably the people around us at the time will ever forget."

MARK CHAMBERLAIN

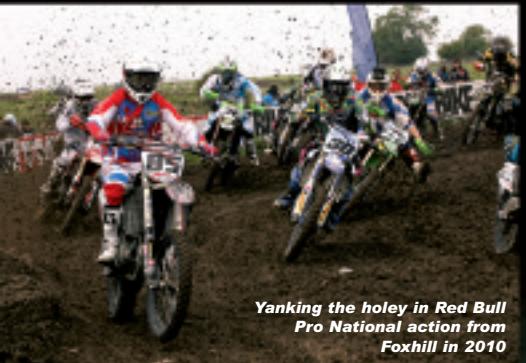
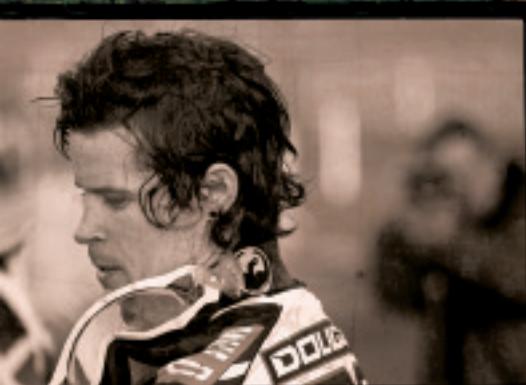
"Mark is still to this day one my best friend and he always will be if I ride for him again or don't. I always stay in touch with him. I know Mark always has my interests at heart and that's why he's a good friend. Even when he maybe wanted to keep me on he'd still say what was best for me and give me advice on which deal to take and I always knew he'd support me if I decided to stay riding for him."

ZACH OSBORNE

"He's so dedicated to his racing and he's a bloody good bloke. When he first met me he thought I was mental but then I guess a lot of people do! When me and Billy were together he couldn't get his head around it and didn't want to know but he's kind of sussed it now and since I've ended up riding for Steve he's actually realised we're all right and now he's a close friend. We go BMXing together and hang out when we can in the week but we're different in approach. I think he still thinks I'm a knob but now in a loveable way!"



After a year away Jason's looking forward to returning to GP action



Yanking the holey in Red Bull Pro National action from Foxhill in 2010

performance at the final British championship round at Pontrilas in 2002 where he jumped on board the YZF250 for the first time and promptly qualified and scored points he made the moves to get him on board.

"I've always been a smoother rider than I have been reckless so as soon as I got the chance to ride the four-stroke I felt I could ride more like myself. I didn't have to hang it out as much as I did on the 125 so I gelled straight away with the bike and that naturally brought back some of my confidence. That helped a lot. I rode it at Pontrilas, qualified and scored points straight away so it was quite a turning point.

"After that Mark Chamberlain offered me a deal for the following year. He'd already helped me when I was on an 80 – I think he got the idea of running a team while he was helping me out so when he finally got it up and running and came in for me it felt the natural thing to do.

"There was an offer from Steve – he's very loyal to his riders but he was okay with it and understood the situation. I was 15 years old and the decision was down to me. My dad was cool with letting me decide I think because he knew if I was happy that it was my decision I'd be happy and more relaxed at the races and ride like he knew I could."

That first year with Motovision really put Dougan on the MX map and all of a sudden the larger teams were looking at him. Mark knew

he'd struggle to keep him on his team but as a good friend he didn't make the situation any more difficult for Jason than it needed to be. So off Dougan went to have a full-on crack at GPs with the new RTT Honda team alongside Carl Nunn and even yours truly as his team-mate on the domestic scene. It's when I got to know the real Jason Dougan and I saw a young man go through some tough times. Although he had a stellar 2003 it ended badly and that carried over into 2004 and there was a lot more to it than met the public eye...

"What really ruined that year was actually the end of 2003 when me and Jeff Dement came together at Pontrilas in that big crash and that ruined my ankle and also my chance to get second in the British championship and win the Under 21s. I done that injury to my foot and was told it was just a sprain but then I was in a lot of pain so I went and had it checked out again and it turned out it was smashed to pieces!"

Because that injury was at the end of the year not many people knew about it and it affected my preparation for 2004. It took me close to six months before I could get on a bike – I was playing catch-up and testing a new bike with a new team. It was a hard year and a bit of a reality check.

"Keith Thorpe my mechanic was always good for me and helped me so much – he'd been there and done it with Dave so that

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**So can we expect great things from Dougan this year?
"Right now I'm happy and that's the main thing..."**



As a youth racer Doogs didn't show huge promise in the UK



was good – but the team was split into two groups and I don't think that helped too much. All the riders got on great but the rest of the team didn't really gel and it didn't help with me starting to put pressure on myself again, especially with it being my first full year in GPs.

"I did exactly the same thing at GPs as I had done with Steve in my first year at the British championships. I couldn't get my head around the whole qualifying thing and I ended up taking too much of a knock when I didn't qualify rather than taking it on the chin and moving forward."

A return to Motovision followed and, feeling at home and happy once again, Dougan started to build on what he'd learned from his baptism of fire at the GPs. And he's still building. He's been through a short stint on the now defunct RWJ team, then found himself on a privateer KTM, went back to Mark and Motovision again, nearly hooked a ride with CAS Honda and ended up with CCM before going back to Yamaha last year with a support ride from Barry Moore at Phoenix Tools and Steve Dixon.

One thing you soon learn about Doogs is that as much as he's crazy and will do some pretty

stupid stuff to make you laugh he's much, much more reserved when it comes to his mental approach to racing. It's like he's got it all the wrong way around.

His dad, Dave, an ex Navy physical instructor, has trained virtually all the top riders that have come through Steve Dixon's team but even he admits he can't fire up his own son in the way he could someone like Billy. Not because he's not motivated enough but because Doogs just isn't the type you'll see showing his aggression. He won't be banging his handlebars, shouting and screaming on the startline. He's the complete contrast. Cool, calm, calculated and controlled is his approach.

"Getting all fired up just isn't my thing. That's one thing my dad has always said since he's been training me. He's never been able to psyche me up like he does the other riders he works with. When I have tried psyching myself up I ride over the edge and end up going slower because I'm trying too hard. A prime example was the first race at the Maxxis this year when I went out and just rode like I had been all winter and won the race."

Little Silver was a prime example of what Dougan can do when he's relaxed and all is good in his world and he believes that is probably the most important thing he's learned over the past 12 months. Not just for his race results but also in making him a better, happier person.

"Last year has made me enjoy it all again and made me realise what I've got and the opportunities I have in life. I was struggling and not really enjoying it like I should be and I didn't really know it was getting me down as much as it was until I made those changes and I really started to enjoy going to the races again.

"That has made me move forward and I'll be keeping that attitude because you have to enjoy it while it lasts. Just because I'm on the country's biggest and most successful GP team and there's added pressure doesn't mean it shouldn't be enjoyable. I now know what I've got to do for myself to cope with that pressure whereas before I didn't. I've realised I don't need to worry about that pressure, the minute I start thinking about that pressure I'll go backwards. Right now I'm happy and that's the main thing."



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BRAVE NEW WORLD!

WITH HIS DAYS AS A MEMBER OF THE WORLD TRIALS ELITE BEHIND HIM, GRAHAM JARVIS MADE THE SWITCH TO EXTREME ENDUROS AND WITH WINS AT HELL'S GATE AND THE TOUGH ONE ALREADY BEHIND HIM IN 2011 THE QUIET MAN FROM HARROGATE IS MAKING A LOT OF NOISE IN HIS NEW-FOUND CAREER...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Sutty





© Edmunds J. KTM Images



The loud, brash, flash world of extreme enduros and endurocross racing has exploded onto the scene in recent years, dominated by larger-than-life personalities backed by big-buck energy drinks contesting high-profile events. It's a niche sport that's attracting a mainstream following and allowing its top riders to reinvent themselves for a global audience.

Already at the top in conventional timercard enduros, this new world of indoor endurocross and outdoor extreme events has given David Knight a televised platform to display his prodigious talents. And Taddy Blazusiak, having exploited his full potential on a trials bike but failed to make a serious impression on the WTC, grabbed a career lifeline when he came from nowhere to win the Erzberg Rodeo.

So given the showbiz image that surrounds the sport, how ironic is it that potentially extreme enduro's next big thing is a softly-spoken, low-profile 35-year-old originally from Canterbury who now calls the gentle Yorkshire town of Harrogate home?

Graham Jarvis needs no introduction to trials fans. The former factory Scopra and Sherco rider would have been the stand-out British trials star of his generation if it hadn't been for 12-time world champ Dougie Lampkin hogging the limelight. But even so his tally of five British crowns, four SSDT wins, nine Scott Trial wins and five world round wins is pretty impressive stuff.

But all good things must come to an end and finding his top-flight trials career drawing to a close Grimbo turned to enduros – a sport he was already dabbling in with some success – to get his two-wheeled kicks.

"I started enduros as a bit of fun. Sherco had just brought the enduro bike out and they were keen for me to do something. The extreme events weren't as big then and I did my first extreme in 2006 at Erzberg – I just went out there on the off-chance and finished fourth which was good on an unproven bike, especially as it was a 450 which wasn't the ideal tool for the job.

At that point I realised that I could do something in the extreme events.

"But trials was still my focus at that point because I was still winning the British championship and I saw that as the priority. The extreme stuff was just something on the side. Then in '08 I won the British championship at the last round – it went down to the wire. I was finding it harder to win but I'd also had enough of it really – I felt like I'd done all I was going to do in trials and at the same time I was developing a passion for enduros. I was definitely enjoying them more than trials."

Having already chalked up victory in the 2011 Hell's Gate extreme event in Italy, Graham dominated last month's The Tough One. His trials riding skills were clearly evident as he made some of the toughest parts of the course look like novice routes but by winning by 10 minutes he also showed that he's no slouch when it comes to cracking the throttle open. Still, that's hardly a surprise as with a record-breaking nine victories in the infamous Scott time and observation trial – the original extreme event where riders are judged on their speed as well as their trials skills and the inspiration for the

first-ever motocross race – his ability to haul ass on a motorbike is already well-documented...

"I guess the speed thing developed from The Scott. I've always enjoyed it, I think it's down to me liking the challenge of a hard event. It's more down to the rider as well – you're not stopping, relying on minders and all the rest of it."

"But it's still a challenge to get my speed up on a motocross bike. I've done a fair bit of motocross but I've not had any formal training although I had a bit of tuition from my Team Manager in Italy, Marco Caribotti, who used to race supercross."

The expression 'extreme' is a blanket term that covers what are actually pretty diverse events, ranging from The Tough One and Erzberg which involve intense exertion lasting a few hours to Hell's Gate and Last Man Standing which are day-long slogs through to the Roof of Africa and Red Bull Romaniacs which are gruelling multi-day races. And on top of that there are indoor endurocross races which follow a supercross style format.

All of which means that the breed of racers specialising in these events need to be adaptable with a wide-ranging skill-set.

"Every event is so different – some you're going all day like Hell's Gate, then Erzberg's more intense for an hour-and-a-half. You have to adapt to each – the conditions are so different at each event and I think that's what makes them so enjoyable."

Graham's ability to ride up monster steps and cover ground at speed is already common knowledge but after a lifetime of trials adapting to the intensity of a race situation is more difficult.

"I need to work on my racing skills, especially for the indoor events where it's more intense and in places like off the start more related to motocross. To be honest I've found it harder indoors but I've still done all right – finished fifth this year, fourth last year so I'm not far off and still feel I can improve on my indoor skills but the outdoor events do come more naturally to me. I'm aiming to win everything I ride outdoors now."

"A lot of riders are specialising in the indoors – I think Taddy's going that way – but for me the priority is the outdoors. There are more events and I feel I can get better results outdoors, I've always got a chance of winning them."

Given the exertion involved – both indoors and out – fitness is another huge consideration. Grimbo still retains much of the racing snake

physique essential to carry off the lycra one-piece look from his trials days but as he gets older surely it's getting harder to stay in shape?

"A lot of it is staying on top of my fitness and avoiding injury. Especially as I get older – sometimes it takes longer to recover. It's a major part of it. The thing with this sport is that every event is different so the demands are different – indoors are more intense, outdoors is about endurance so you need every aspect of fitness to get round."

"So you're either down the gym or riding a lot but then it's also easy to do too much and you can't afford to burn yourself out."

With his switch to the factory-backed Flite Husaberg team, Graham severed ties with long-time sponsor Malcolm Rathmell Sport. Having been backed by MRS for his entire adult career – including his first forays into extreme and endurocross events – it was a dramatic change of scene to move to the Italian team.

"It was difficult to leave MRS – we go back a long way – and also the Sherco boss Marc Teissier who helped me from when I first set out in the world championships. But on the other hand it's a new challenge and good for my motivation."

>>



Grimbo's a clear winner at this year's The Tough One



© Edmunds J. KTM Images



In trials language that's a bloody big dab!



AULD FIRM! GRIMBO VERSUS DOUGIE

One area where Graham has got the edge over all his competitors – apart from Dougie Lampkin who's also moved into extreme events – is when it comes to trials. Although, as Grimbo admits, he and Dougie are maybe over-qualified in this area.

"I got to a higher level than Taddy as a trials rider but I think you only need so much trials skills to get round. But for extreme events – especially the hard ones – you do need to come from a trials background to have any chance."

The mere mention of Dougie Lampkin draws a wry smile from Graham. The pair are life-long rivals who initially competed against each other in youth trials where Grimbo tended to have the upper hand. But Dougie pulled ahead when they hit the adults and went on to claim an unprecedented 12 world titles as his southern rival, by now living in Lampkin's native Yorkshire, found himself in the shadow of his nemesis.

"When I took up enduros I was glad to get away from Dougie and then he followed me! You always know Doug's going to be giving 100 per cent in everything he does so he's hard to beat. At Hell's Gate last year when he had me at the last hill it did hurt a bit but we were the only two finishers so I can't really complain, it was still a good result."

Initially both Graham and Dougie moved into extreme enduros on what could loosely be termed 'inappropriate' machinery with the pair taking on nimble 250 two-strokes on bruising 450 thumpers but with Graham's switch to Husaberg and Dougie's move to Gas Gas they're now suitably armed. And at Hell's Gate in February it was Graham who had the upper hand.

"This year I got my own back and upped my game. I'm learning from experience all the time and using that and trying to improve. I was expecting a battle to the end at Hell's Gate this year but it never developed so it was nice to win by a good margin."

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BRAVE NEW WOR



Racing to victory in this year's Hell's Gate



As well as fresh motivation, the move also brings the advantage of more competitive machinery with the Husaberg two-stroke – developed in conjunction with massive input from parent company KTM – just about as close as it comes to a purpose-built extreme weapon.

"A two-stroke's always going to be a bit lighter for the extreme stuff and the Husaberg's a proven bike. There's no complaints there – it's the bike for the job. In every aspect – weight, how quickly it picks up – it's got the edge over the four-strokes."

Enduros may have captured Grimbo's attention but it's the extreme aspect that floats his boat so although he's dabbled with regular timercard events he's got no wish to step up and challenge Knighter in the EWC.

"I've done a couple of world rounds – one in Wales and one in France – and they were a good experience and good for my speed. I had reasonable results – ninth in Wales and 11th in France – but they don't really interest me and I need to focus on the extreme stuff.

"I've won a few events and I'm looking at Erzberg now. I think I've got everything I need with the new bike and Goldentyre are supporting me – the tyres are really good – so I've got everything I need to win. Fingers crossed I can push Taddy."

"Erzberg's still the biggest of the extreme events and it's got to be the goal and Hell's

Gate and the Tough One have given me a bit of confidence."

Before Graham takes on the challenge of the Iron Mountain he's got a return to more familiar territory when he hits the Highlands for the Scottish Six Days Trial and later in the year he'll be a favourite to set standard time when he attempts to push his Scott Trial victory tally into double figures.

After spending the vast majority of his 35 years on two wheels he'd be forgiven for suffering a bad case of burn out but for Graham variety really is the spice of life and the mix and match element of his new career path – plus the odd trial here and there – is ensuring he remains peachy keen.

"I still enjoy my riding – that's the main thing. I'm just happy to be riding a bike after so many years and still making a living from it. After doing trials for so long enduro feels like something new, something I'm still progressing at. I'd done what I could in trials. So it's good to have a new challenge and there are new events coming up on the calendar all the time. It's good fun."

"I'm still learning and I'm probably enjoying riding more than ever. I've achieved a lot on a bike and if I retired now I'd be quite happy but I'm going to keep on riding for as long as I can."

"I'm on the best bike with a good team and enjoying what I'm doing. I'm grateful to get this chance to extend my career."





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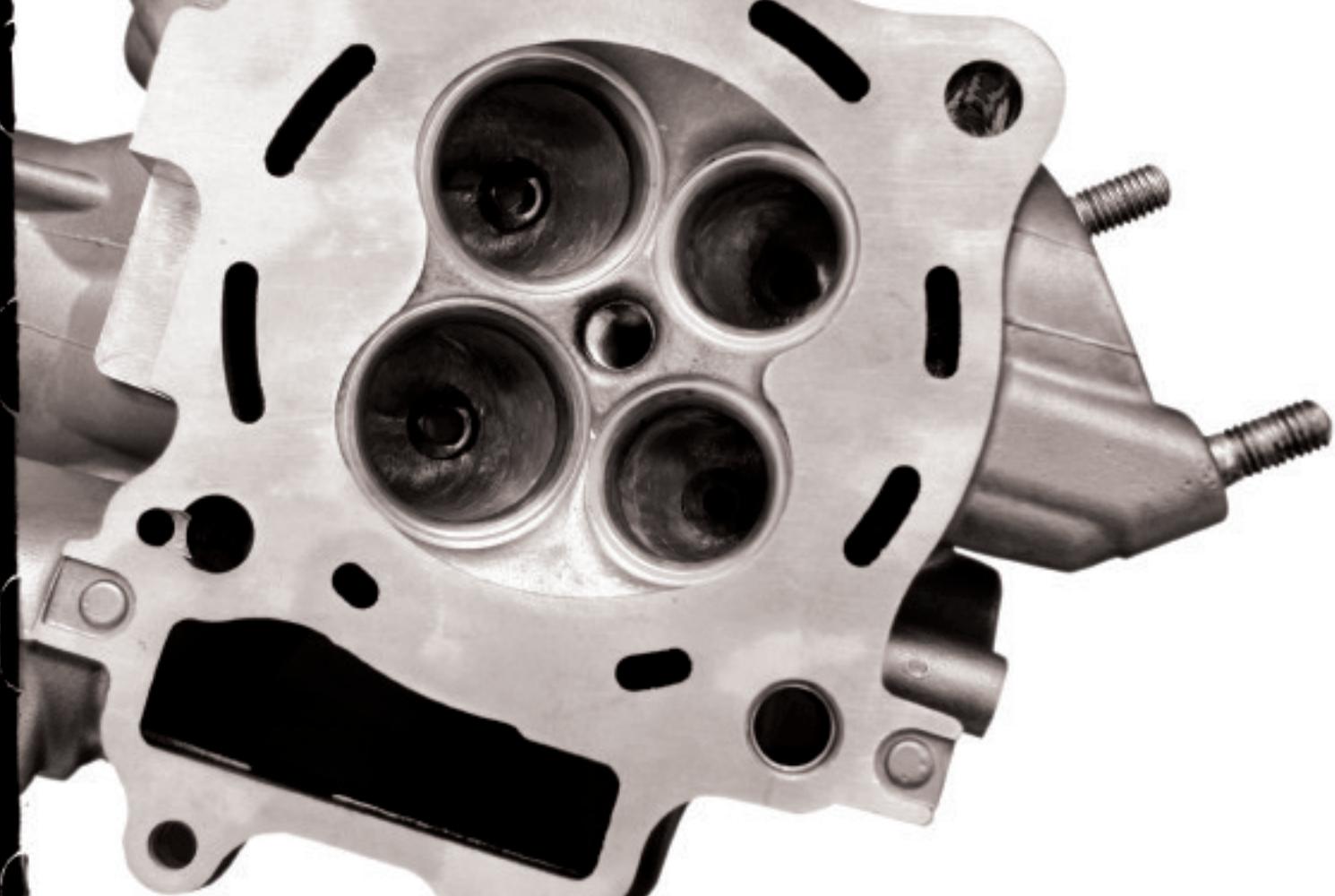
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special feature

*The dyno's a vital tool in
the tuner's arsenal*





RED ROCKET!

SPS RACING TAKE A STOCK CRF250 AND MAKE IT 20 PER CENT MORE POWERFUL...

Photos by Stuart Smith Photography

Honda's CRF250 is a highly popular bike with both pros and clubmen and it's easy to understand why as its sweet-handling chassis and superior build quality make it a must-have machine. As good as it is though there's one place that the Honda needs improvement and that's in the engine department because the red brand's powerplant seems to deliver a lack of ponies year after year. But unlike some stock bikes that can't be modified so much the Honda seems to have a lot of potential locked inside which lets switched on tuners turn this already good bike into an absolute rocket.

SPS Racing in Leicestershire are one such company and for the past couple of years have been working closely with AMCA MX2 championship contender Sean Frayne to get the best out of Honda's MX2 missile. Hunting for a top three finish in the 2011 series the team have gone all-out to make this year's CRF250 a real ripper as a faster bike means more holeshots which quite often translates to better race results – here's how they went about improving Honda's two-fiddy...

The standard bike is run on the dyno with a road tyre fitted to the rear to obtain true power and torque readings at different throttle openings. The bike is also run-in on the dyno, force cooled by the large incoming fan to ensure

the temperature is kept constant.

The bike is then fully stripped down to just the engine and frame. The suspension linkage and headstock is greased and the suspension is also removed and re-valved. This re-valving is to make the initial part of the suspension stroke plush while the remaining part of the stroke gets increasingly stiffer to take the impact of the larger jumps.

The standard airbox is very restricted and all of the air has to come through a small inlet at the top of the left-hand side panel. To compensate for this SPS modify the airbox to the same spec as the 2010 model which allows air to be drawn in from five separate places.

SPS choose to run a DT1 air filter with a DT1 induction kit. DT1 filters prove to be efficient at stopping dirt due to the neoprene seal they have on the face of the filter and the induction kit makes the fitting of the air filter even more rigid and secure.

The cylinderhead also comes in for some extensive work on the inlet and exhaust ports to increase airflow and efficiency. Copper beryllium valve seats are then fitted, with a much harder grade of beryllium fitted to the exhaust ports. These seats are fitted simply to increase the life of the valves as these are better suited to titanium valves as opposed to the standard stainless steel seats.

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THE MAIN MEN!

SPS RACING'S COLIN JALLAND AND SEAN FRAYNE

Hailing from the home of pork pies – that's Melton Mowbray for all you jelly-and-pig-packed-pastry dodging peeps – SPS Racing is predominately an engine tuning and rebuild specialist that has traded successfully alongside an accessory shop for the last 12 years.

Having raced for a long, long time Colin Jalland decided to hang up his Tech 8s two years ago but still felt the need to be involved on the racing circuit so started helping out a young and talented rider by the name of Sean Frayne.

Many of you will already know that Sean was a very successful schoolboy and raced in the BYMX Nationals from

the 65cc Junior class right through to the 125cc Premier division. In 2004 he finished third overall in the BYMX series before leaving the schoolboy scene behind to take on the Maxxis where he qualified for every round and scored points in both the MX1 and MX2 classes.

A move to the AMCA MX2 champs in 2008 not only netted podium results but also earned Sean a place in the British IMBA team. One year later he improved to sixth in the MX2 championship but 2010 has been his most successful season so far as he ended the year a career-best fourth in both the AMCA and IMBA championships.

SPS

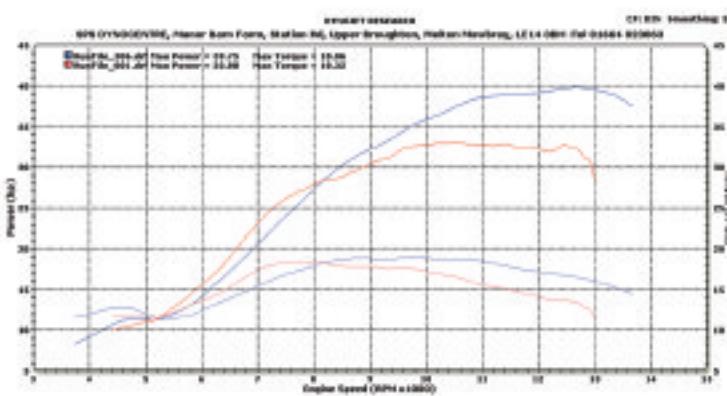
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The standard camshaft is replaced with a high-lift Hot Cams part which has more lift and is also more durable than the stocker. High-rev Kobe steel valve springs are used with genuine Honda valves as these have proved to be exceptionally reliable in the past.

During the 2010 race season the team noticed that the block temperature of the bike was higher than hoped for – especially at sand races – and this raised temperature proved detrimental to good power production. To combat this a DT1 large-capacity water pump is fitted which increases the efficiency of the cooling system and regulates the temperature to a more acceptable level.

To enhance the engine modifications already completed a full Leo Vince stainless steel X3 exhaust system is used. The build quality and value for money of these systems is superb and SPS choose to fit the stainless steel system over the titanium system because they claim there are

some reliability problems with the titanium header pipes.

The final but most fundamental stage of the whole tuning process is to ensure that all of these modifications work in harmony. The standard Honda CRF250 Engine Control Unit would struggle to release the full potential of these extensive modifications so a Microtec M222 ECU system is fitted instead. A relatively new product on the off-road market, the Microtec M222 allows tuners to modify the fuelling and ignition curves at any RPM and throttle position.

SPS use this to take full control of the fuel and ignition maps giving them the total flexibility to design the optimum map to match their engine modifications – something that's essential once you begin altering cam profiles and cylinderhead port dimensions. This level of tunability is also useful when changing engine characteristics for different types of terrain. The ECU can store two individual maps that can be changed on the fly.

This particular feature means it's possible to have a 'power' and 'traction' map at the rider's disposal or even a launch control setting that can be turned on by a bar-mounted switch. This would allow the rider to press the button on the startline and enable the ECU to limit the power. As soon as the bike is rolling the rider could release the button allowing the ECU to revert back to the optimum power setting.

With the bike fully tweaked, tickled and tuned it's then put back on the dyno and the power and torque graph compared to the standard graph from the standard bike. The results show an increase in maximum power from 33 to 39.75 BHP at full throttle with torque raised from 18 to 18.86ft-lbs which is an overall power gain of over 20 per cent!

If you want to know more about this particular project or what SPS Racing can do for you give Colin a call on **01664 823063** or log on to the website at www.spsmotov.com



Renet has no desire to return to motocross

CONVERT ALL-STAR!

HE'S GONE FROM 2009 MX3 WORLD CHAMPION TO THE STAND-OUT ROOKIE PERFORMER OF THE 2010 ENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP – BUT HAS PIERRE ALEXANDRE RENET GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BEAT FELLOW FRENCHMEN JOHNNY AUBERT AND ANTOINE MEO?

Words and photos Jonty Edmunds

If there's one thing the Enduro World Championship's full of at the moment it's 'former' French motocross riders. Antoine Meo and Johnny Aubert have risen above all others to become two of the EWC's biggest stars but over the years there's been more than a few talented French MXers who have tried their hand at the woods game.

Up until now all French motocross-to-enduro racers have had one thing in common – they've ended up out of love with motocross or, more often than not, out of a job and ended up somehow trying their hand at enduro. Be it due to a lack of results, injuries or both, the likes of Fred Bolley, Luigi Seguy and many more have opted to give enduro a go.

There is one notable exception to the rule that says a French motocross rider must be drifting his way down the GP result sheets before making the switch to enduro. His name? Pierre Alexandre Renet – or Pela as he's better known. Winner of the '09 MX3 world championship, Pela walked away from motocross not because he was injured or had endured years of mediocre results but because he saw no future there for himself.

Now it could be said that even as MX3 world champion Renet's not exactly one of France's motocross elite if you look at the strength in-depth the French have when it comes to MX. But when you

consider that he's finished on the podium at the Motocross des Nations at Budds Creek and had a handful of top 10 results in MX1 GPs you understand that he's also a long, long way from being on the scrap heap. So why the change?

"In '08 I was racing in MX1," explains the 26-year-old, "but because of a lot of injuries it was a very difficult season for me. At the end of the year it became clear that it was going to be hard for my team to stay in MX1 because of the budget they had. The team wanted to race in MX3 which I didn't really want to do. It was my second year with the team and I didn't have any other options so I agreed to race in MX3 and go for the title. My goal was always to return to the MX1 world championship and although I did have some offers they weren't right for me. That's when I started to think about changing to enduro."

Thinking about enduro soon became racing enduro as Renet turned to KTM France Competitions Director Eric Bernard, himself a motocross turned enduro racer. Simply explaining that he wanted to make the change, he tried a 450EXC and the deal was done. Renet, having never even done a Euro championship event, was suddenly a full-time enduro racer.

Another difference between Renet and many other French motocross turned enduro racers – most notably Antoine Meo – is the fact that Pela didn't want to return to motocross. His mind was made

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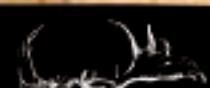


Newly signed to the Husaberg factory team, Pela is looking to capitalise on a very promising debut year in the EWC

profile



CONVERT
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PIERRE ALEXANDRE RENET



Pela started his rookie year strong on the KTM and ended the season on top of the podium at his home GP



up – it was woods, timecards and tyre changing from that moment on. "When I made the decision to go in enduro I knew that I was finished with motocross. Now after one full season I'm sure."

As one of many French motocross racers to convert over to enduro at the first round of the 2010 EWC season, not many pundits outside of France took much notice of Renet and few expected him to be any better than a mid-pack runner. They were wrong. Secretly setting himself the goal that he 'wanted to do the same as Johnny Aubert and learn quickly' Pela did just that. But not before enduring one of the toughest world championship races for many seasons.

"The first lap of the event in Spain is one I will never forget, it was the hardest enduro lap I have ever done. It was incredible," admits Pela. "I started with Ivan Cervantes but I hardly saw him all weekend. I really thought that I was going to lose time during that event. I crashed on a downhill on one of the laps and lost a lot of time, I had to go immediately into the time control and then into the extreme test with no rest, no drink,

no nothing. I got stuck in the uphill on that same extreme test and lost too much time. When I walked the extreme test I didn't know what I was letting myself in for."

After battling his way through the GP of Spain to finish both days with double digit points, Pela was clearly one of the 'gonna be good' motocross converts. One week later in Portugal he again performed well and narrowly missed the podium on day one in the highly-competitive E2 class.

As the season rolled on and Pela's understanding and confidence grew it wasn't long before he was on the podium. At the GP of Italy, arguably the most important GP of the season, he placed third on both days. Just three races into his new career as an enduro racer and Renet was delivering results every bit as good as Johnny Aubert and Antoine Meo did during their debut seasons. And more third place results followed in Poland and Greece.

"My first season was good," offers Pela, clearly playing down just how good it was.

RENET ON...

LIFE IN ENDURO

"It's much nicer than in motocross. When I arrived in enduro everyone was really cool with me. Even the best guys in my class like Aholá and Cervantes were really sympathetic and welcoming. Johnny Aubert really helped me all season, too. In motocross I'm sure that as a new guy I wouldn't be welcomed like I was in enduro."

FRENCH MX 'CONVERTS'

"I don't know exactly why so many riders are coming from motocross into enduro now. For me it wasn't because Johnny or Antoine had success. I have always followed enduro. I think a lot of French motocross riders follow enduro, it's a part of our motorcycling culture."

ENDURO IN FRANCE

"Enduro is very popular in France. You only have to look at the number of spectators that come to the French EWC GP. Maybe it's not quite as many as the French MXGP but it's close. I think it's getting stronger, too. The more French riders compete the more popular it becomes, which brings more riders to the sport."

"I managed to make progress race after race and after the first GP in Spain I knew I could do much, much better because I made so many mistakes. Eric Bernard really helped me at that first race because he understood what I was going through. He told me it was normal that I felt a little out of my depth and he was right. After that first event things got better and better for me."

"I wasn't really surprised by my results but I was pleased with them. When I was in motocross I was a very smooth rider, almost to the point that it was a problem for me because I needed to be more aggressive. I knew that my riding style would suit enduro really well. I also knew that I had good speed and that if I didn't make any mistakes then I would be fast. Everything went well last year."

What makes Pela's performances even more impressive is the fact that he was mounted on a virtually stock bike. Quickly learning that riding talent is by far the greater contributing factor in enduro, with a stock bike fitted with a pipe >>

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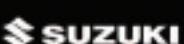
ROUND 1 - 2nd & 3rd April - FatCat MotoParc

ROUND 2 7TH & 8TH MAY - LANDRAKE

ROUND 3 11th & 12th June - Whitby ROUND 4 30th & 31st July - Canada Heights ROUND 5 27th & 28th August - Hawkstone Park

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RENÉT ON...

GETTING FIXED

"I should have been in the French ISDE team last year in Mexico. But I had to have an operation on my shoulder which stopped me from racing. Two years ago I injured my shoulder and the middle of last year I saw a specialist who explained that I needed an operation. After the last world championship race I had a pin taken out of my femur and then got my shoulder fixed. This year I definitely want to be a part of the six days squad, I will work hard to make sure of it."

MXGP

"The situation in motocross is not good now. It's really a shame for young riders because getting into the GPs is hard, really hard. The step between the top riders in MX1 and the guys around 15th place is too big. There are fast riders but there are also riders who have paid to be a part of a GP team. It's stupid but it's the system there is now."



On his way to the MX3 world title at Hawkstone in 2009



CONVER
GALL-ST

Pela's already pretty much at home over man-made obstacles

and uprated suspension he was happy.

"In enduro the bike is not so important like in motocross. I rode a standard bike with a different exhaust and suspension last year and got good results. You don't start in a group, that's a big difference because you're not trying to out-power the guy next to you."

The season drew to a close in the best possible way for Renet with a day two E2 class win at his home round of the series – the GP of France. Having delivered impressive results in all countries and in all conditions, in topping the final day of the series Pela once again confirmed his intentions to succeed in enduro. But oddly it wasn't the highlight of the year for Renet.

"The best moment was the first day in Portugal, the second GP. There was a very big uphill and Juha Salminen and Mika Ahola both got stuck but I didn't. They took time penalties and I finished the day second. They took away their time penalties at the end of the day so I ended up fourth but still at the second GP it was good to know I could be near the top of the results. Then at the GP of Italy I got a double podium which was great. Winning the last day of the series in France was also fantastic."

Year one was about two things for Renet – doing as well as he could but, more importantly, learning as much as he could. "I learned many, many things but the biggest thing was that I need to be faster in enduro tests, especially when it's a true enduro test in the trees. Also, I need to be

faster on natural extreme tests. I'm okay on the man-made ones but the natural ones are tough."

With year one now consigned to the history books and a freshly-inked contract with the Husaberg Factory Team, Pela has the backing and equipment to take his racing to the next level – which for him means delivering regular podium results and day wins.

"I had several propositions to join different teams for this year so it was very different to one year before when I was hoping to get a good deal and return to racing in MX1," explains Renet. "I tried the Husaberg and really liked it. For me it was the best solution. In France Eric Bernard also works with Husaberg so that was good. They also offered me a good deal and I'm very happy with the team and with the bike."

So can Renet become the next French motocross racer to win an EWC title? And will he be able to do that in 2011? Up against countrymen Johnny Aubert and Antoine Meo plus many other top-flight racers, Pela knows it's going to be anything but easy. But he's ready for the challenge and believes he can deliver the goods.

"My goal is to be on the podium at the end of the season but I know that it is a very competitive class. Do I think I can fight against Johnny and Antoine? Yes, I do. I will certainly be closer to them than I was last year. Yeah, I can fight with them. I hope..."



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A diehard fan, Barry Moore's support for MX extends from local club races through to grands prix

LOCAL HERO!

**FROM RACER TO SPONSOR TO TRACK OPERATOR,
PHOENIX TOOLS' BOSS BARRY MOORE HAS SUPPORTED
THE SOUTH WEST MX SCENE FOR OVER 25 YEARS...**

Words by Dickie Dye Photos by Rob Grist Photography

www.mercedeclick.com

PHOENIX
TOOLS

In the late 1980s Barry 'Holeshot' Moore was a familiar figure around the motocross circuits of the South West. He found his local Teignbridge AMCA club a new track at Little Hempston and single-handedly carved a circuit out of the hillside gorse bushes – or so he claims! At around the same time in 1988 Barry began his own tool sales business – Phoenix Tools – and from this point began to sponsor local riders under his own banner.

Barry is typical of the type of grassroots sponsor of motocross, without which the sport would struggle even more. His involvement in the sport has grown over the past 20 years with his initial interest as simply a rider expanding to embrace sponsorship of riders, teams, events and series with a spot of track co-ownership thrown in for good measure. His list of sponsored riders includes names such as Dave Thorpe who won his fourth world title aboard a Phoenix Tools Honda and racers of the calibre of CCM teamsters Stephen Sword and Tom Church and Cosworth Yamaha's Jason Dougan.

"The primary reason for being involved is because I love the sport," explains Barry. "I have enjoyed riding and racing motocross bikes for more than 25 years and the pleasure I get from both riding myself and watching my riders with Phoenix Tools on their bikes is immeasurable. Some years I have probably spent more money on other people's kids than my own but I get such a buzz from seeing my bikes at the front of the field or at a GP or any race, hearing Phoenix Tools around the track sound system.

"I treat my sponsorship like any advertising package and although there have been a few

exceptions I try to support local riders who are going to race predominantly in the South West and particularly around where I'm based in Newton Abbott. I would say at least a third of my customers are related in some way to the motocross scene which is a huge chunk of business for me each year and there is definitely a kick-back when my riders do well.

"It's a talking point as well. Chatting about motocross softens customers up before I hit them with the sales pitch. Most of the time they are so engrossed with the results and paddock talk from the weekend they don't even ask how much stuff is – I just put it on the account!"

For 2011 Barry's sponsoring CCM's Maarten Cremers but, more importantly, with backing from long-time supporters Teng Tools he's pulled together his own three-man Phoenix Tools Kawasaki team with Luke Norris, Ben Denison and Dave Yelland.

"Small businesses like mine are finding it tough at the moment but I want to remain pro-active and drum up more business by being even more involved in something I enjoy," explains Barry. "For 2011 my riders have been chosen from three perspectives. I like them all and get on with them really well, they will all be racing locally in the South West which will promote and enhance my business and they are all capable of winning. They have proven track records."

The 'elder statesman' of the team, Dave Yelland needs little introduction. A former BSMA champ, Under 21 front runner and regular British MX1 championship points scorer a few years ago, the 26-year-old was South West Centre champ in 2006 on a Phoenix Tools Honda. He's also suffered

>>



Luke Norris flies the flag on team home ground at Little Silver



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*Source: The Exchange, November 2010 **Excludes professional sports people.



Luke's aiming for the top in Europe and America

more than his fair share of injuries that have dented his career prospects.

"Like most racers he has a daytime job working in a car repair centre with his brother, starting at 5am and finishing early to train in the gym and run as often as he can," says Barry. "I've supported Dave for quite a few years and he's always worked hard and come up with some good results."

Having been on the scene for a good few years, Dave recognises and appreciates just how valuable having a sponsor like Barry is. He's also very much aware he needs to match Barry's commitment with his own drive and dedication.

"The more I put into racing the more I get out of it," says Dave. "Fitness and determination are the key points in becoming a sponsored rider for me. I always stay positive and try not to look at anything negatively. I don't beat myself up. I just focus on the next race and think about how I can improve."

"My main influences are my family, friends and sponsors and I always do my very best so I know I'm not letting anyone down. I know how hard it is to get support – especially as I haven't raced professionally for two years – but I want to thank all the people who have supported me and helped me to come back by getting some good results."

Despite being just 17, Luke Norris already has 14 years in the saddle under his belt and is a graduate of the Mervyn Anstie Motocross Academy. A member of the winning youth MXdN team all the way back in 2003, Luke's also a former British youth SX champ and has been involved in Dave Thorpe's winter training programme.

"In the next five years my dream is to race AMA supercross and do well in GPs," says the ambitious Oxford teenager. "I try hard to stay fit and healthy and as a sponsored rider I try to always promote the best image for myself and my sponsors.

>>



Dave Yelland's the elder statesman of the team

JUSTIFICATION!

FOR THE LOVE OF MX...

"Times may be hard for small businesses at the moment but for me the involvement both commercially and personally in motocross is justified. I think few people make a living solely out of motocross these days but it certainly enhances my business and my life in general."

"Together with DT we have taken over the day-to-day running of the local Kingsteignton track and hopefully we'll have quite a few races there this year. We've completely rebuilt the circuit and it is already booked up well into 2011 although we still have some dates available."

"On the face of it, it seems having a motocross track is a licence to print money but in reality it is hard work to set up and maintain and very time consuming. Motocross is so weather dependent – good weather for motocross would be a week of rain on an already prepared track, 24 hours of sun, then a dry race day. How often does that happen?"

"I would say the track we have maybe breaks even at the end of the year but probably will cost us money."





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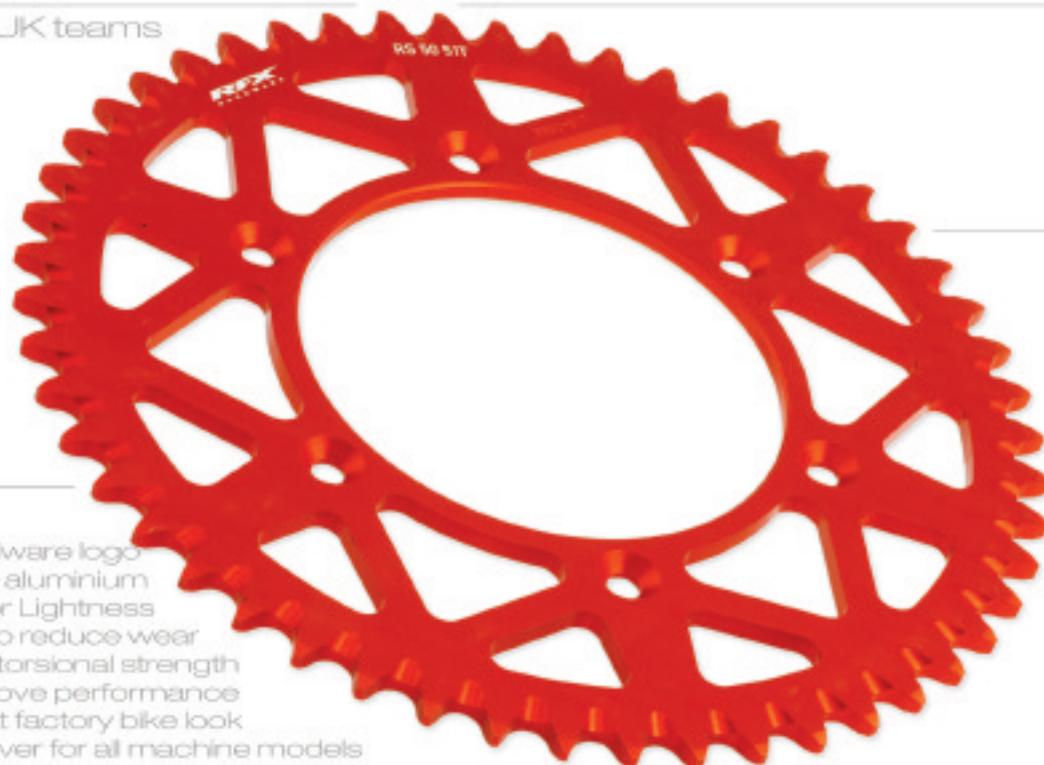
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"Most of my suppliers are also keen to be involved with my team. They often supply me with materials or product either discounted or free – if it isn't product which the team uses directly it's often stuff I can sell, off-setting the running costs. Some ask for a sticker on the van and the bike, others are just pleased to help and chip in."

"I usually invite them to our local national championship round at Landrake or Little Silver and provide some kind of hospitality. Obviously, I organise as much press and media coverage as I can and push the sponsors at every opportunity which is much easier if riders in the team are winning or up the front of the races."

"There's quite a lot of other product needed to race each year. I try to quantify what I will need and use in the form of oils, clothing and parts etc then put a deal to the suppliers within the industry. I feel I have quite a good name in the sport and I'm lucky to have backing from quite a few sponsors who provide me with what I need either discounted or, if I'm really lucky, free. What I receive I pass on to my riders. What I can't get hold of the riders must supply and obviously if they can do their own deals for the whole team we all benefit."

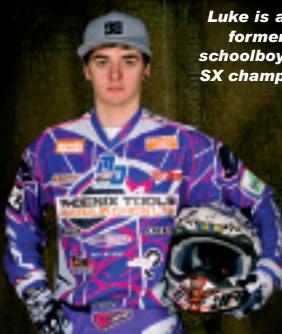
"I think because I've always run my team professionally it is easier to go to potential sponsors with some history and some success, especially at local and centre level. Thankfully this year some great sponsors have come on board such as MD Racing, Rock Oil, Scruffs, Talon, CI Sport, DEP Pipes, DC shoes, Merge Graphics, Bahco, Lazerpics and Rob Grist Photography."

profile

Local lad Ben Denison is a tip for the top



Luke is a former schoolboy SX champ



"My biggest influence is James Stewart. Watching him ride gives me a huge buzz and motivation. Also, Dave Thorpe and Mervyn Anstie have helped me so much to get me to where I am right now."

The third member of the team is another local rider living in Kingsteignton. Compared to his team-mates he's a raw novice but in the four years Ben Denison's been racing he's already picked up a Cornish championship and Barry reckons he's capable of going on to bigger and better things.

"Locally he's always at the front of the pack and I think with a little motivation and support he can be a force to be reckoned with on the national circuit," says Barry. "I see potential in Ben. He's training to be a plumber although, luckily, working with his dad he has been having time off to train and prepare with Dave Yelland for the coming season."

"I think all three racers have the ability to make an impression on the British motocross scene and it would be great to have sponsored a young rider who then goes on to be a champion. I'm pleased to give them all a break. But I expect my team riders to try hard and be well presented. They are representatives for me and my business and it helps if they are polite and approachable. If they are winning as well then happy days!"

"Most people in the sport are enthusiasts like me and most of the time the racers I sponsor or help out are very, very grateful for everything I do for them and the involvement I have. Of course you can't get it right every time and occasionally I guess I've made some wrong choices. The whole sponsorship deal can work out quite an expensive exercise for me. There are always a few of those who just want to take and give little or nothing in return. Sometimes just a sincere thank you is all which is needed. How hard can that be?"

Barry's enthusiasm for motocross is clear to see and his grassroots passion makes him an ambassador for the sport not just on a local level with his support extending through to nationals and the GPs. Although for a diehard South West stalwart it doesn't get much better than having your rider win the area's biggest, most historic race.

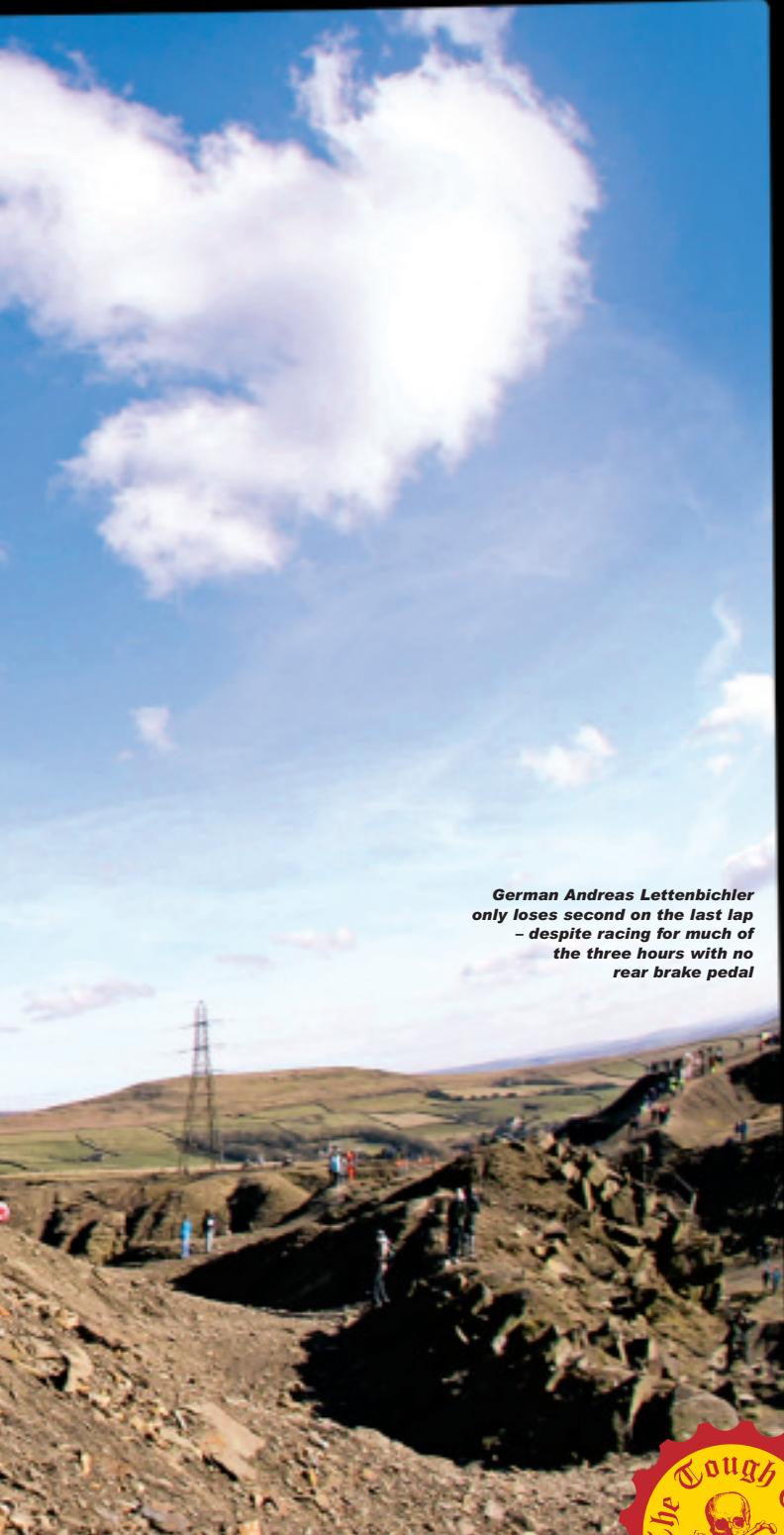
"One of the highlights of the Phoenix Tools team in motocross was when Thorpe won the Patchquick Trophy on one of my bikes – although while the success is obviously great, it is difficult to place a price on the continuing pleasure I get from just being involved in motocross. "Anyone can follow our success on our website and, of course, if you need tools or diamond blades we have it all..."



SEVEN YEAR ITCH...

AFTER SIX YEARS AT NANTMAWR IT'S TIME FOR THE TOUGH ONE TO FIND A NEW HOME AT BACK COWM QUARRY WHERE GRAHAM JARVIS DOMINATES

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Sutty



German Andreas Lettenbichler only loses second on the last lap – despite racing for much of the three hours with no rear brake pedal



First across the line, Grimbo's greeted by Steve Ireland and a TV crew



For 2011 there's a new venue, new date and new extended run-time for The Tough One and heading into the event there's also going to be a new champion crowned as the UK's #1 extreme enduro finds itself scratching a seven year itch.

That infamous irritation – which sees men sloping off from loyal partners in search of some how's yer father with a bit on the side – strike's Wirral Off-Road's flagship event and after six happy years in Nantmawr Quarry it's time for a new squeeze.

So it's out with Nantmawr and in with Back Cowm Quarry, high on the hills above Rochdale. It's also out with The Tough One's traditional late-January slot and in with a new date in mid-March. And the cherry on top of Steve Ireland's hot new honey is an extended three-hour running time – that's a whole extra hour of suffering for the Pro and Expert riders.

Back Cowm is a perfect setting for an event like The Tough One with its abandoned quarry workings, derelict buildings and graffiti-daubed walls adding a post-apocalyptic feel. It's a sprawling, barren backdrop that throws up a mixture of balls-out climbs, arse-clenching descents and massive boulders that call for technical trials skills mixed with a big helping of right wrist.

After more or less dominating The Tough One since its inception, five-time winner David Knight's missing from the entry list – as is 2009 champ Taddy Blazusiak – which means there's going to be a new name etched into the record books. And right at the front of the queue is Flite Husaberg's Graham Jarvis.

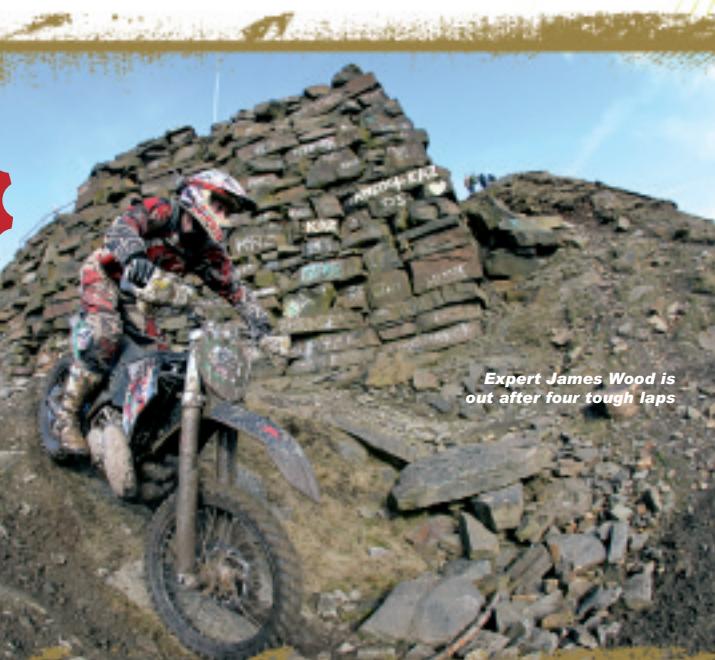
Just like Knighter and Taddy, Grimbo's coming at it from a trials riding background and in fact he's got a much better pedigree when it comes to the feet-up game than either of the factory KTM men having won WTC rounds and finished as high as fourth in the world. Okay, so he's less experienced in the fast-paced world of extreme enduros but with victories including the Romanians and this year's Hell's Gate he's a pretty seasoned – and successful – campaigner.

On paper there are a number of riders who could challenge Jarvis but some last-minute manoeuvring means there's no Wayne Braybrook, Tom Sagar and Paul Edmondson on the start so instead it's up to German Andreas Lettenbichler and extreme Lancastrian Paul Bolton to provide some serious opposition.

This year's start features a mass sprint to the bikes and it's Andrew Reeves who's first away. Grimbo is virtually dead last thanks to his woeful sprinting talents – luckily what he loses on two legs he more than makes up for on two wheels and after threading his way through some early lap one carnage he's first man to power up onto the finishline plateau and skip across the man-made log and tyre obstacles.

From this point on the winner never looks in any doubt – Grimbo's got the speed and fitness and as challenging as the course is, there's nothing his silky smooth trials riding skills aren't a match for. So all that's left to spoil his party is a mechanical problem but his two-stroke Husaberg doesn't miss a beat and his eventual winning margin – a whopping 10 minutes – shows just how on-form he is as he works towards his ultimate goal of winning every outdoor extreme event he enters.

"I had a really bad start and then I got armpump so it was >>



Expert James Wood is out after four tough laps

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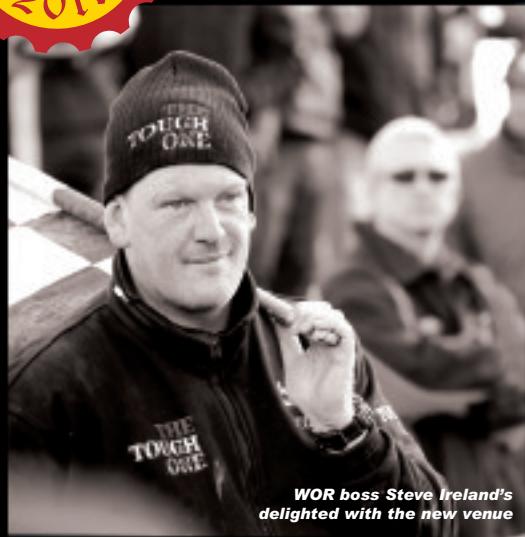
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Tom Hiron's negotiating an old quarry building



WOR boss Steve Ireland's delighted with the new venue

TEAR-JERKER!

STEVE'S LABOUR OF LOVE

The days leading up to The Tough One are an emotional rollercoaster ride for WOR main man Steve Ireland. The WOR team set up camp at Back Cowm almost a full week before the event and have to deal with just about the worst Mother Nature can sling at them.

"I've got a four-wheel caravan," says Steve, "a proper heavy solid thing. And one night it was rocking so hard in the wind I thought it was going to go over. I was sh*tting myself! Then after we marked the full course out everything blew down and we had to do it again so it's been hard work."

"I'm feeling a bit emotional to be honest at the moment. The team have been unbelievable this week – they've all given 100 per cent – the great British public has come out in their thousands to support us and the weather's been unbelievable. I'm the luckiest man in the UK today."

"I'm really pleased with The Tough One moving up here – it's still number one and to all the people who've shook my hand and told me it can't be topped all I can say is yes it can, right here next year."

A full 10 minutes ahead of the field, Graham Jarvis is the stand-out star



Dutch road race ace Juergen van der Goorbergh



just steady away and I kept reminding myself that it was a three-hour race and tried not to panic," says Graham. "Luckily a few people got tangled up so I was out front halfway round the first lap.

"After Hell's Gate I was always expected to win but it's one thing to say it, another thing to do it. I'm feeling good on the bike and doing some good training so I was feeling confident and it's always nice to win by a good margin."

"When you start to get tired and the track cuts up towards the end it does get a bit harder – there were a few more bodies strewn around on the last couple of laps. My trials riding background helped me to pick lines and find grip – and getting the right line was everything around there."

Of course, the million dollar question is would he still have won if David Knight and Taddy Blazusiak had been racing? Graham's refreshingly honest with his answer...

"Would I have liked Knight and Taddy there? [Laughs] Yes and no. I know I've got good speed now but Knight and Taddy are still regarded as the best riders in the world so I would have liked to compare my speed to them. On the other hand it was nice to win by 10 minutes!"

With Grimbo clear out front you could be forgiven for thinking the racing would be boring but far from it. Out on the course there are some pretty serious stoppers – most notable a slippery slab/step combo that sees some typically full-bloodied efforts and equally full-bloodied Larry Loopouts. After conditions deteriorate a slower, safer line develops up the left-hand side but the top men continue to show their skills by blitting straight up the middle although even Grimbo almost ends up in a heap when he breaks grip near the top and the marshals are forced to lend a helping hand.

The battle for second seems to be pretty much decided in favour of Lettenbichler – lap after lap Bolt hunts him down but just as he appears to be closing he makes a mistake and Letti opens up a gap again. But with Jarvis comfortably home, when the second-placed man races into the final arena section it's Bolts and his KTM ahead after the German Husqvarna rider loses his front wheel and hits the deck.

"The track was brilliant – they've done a really good job – but I was just a nightmare for the first hour," admits Bolts. >>



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RESULTS

PRO

1	Graham Jarvis	Husaberg	12 laps
2	Paul Bolton	KTM	12
3	Andreas Lettenbichler	Husqvarna	12
4	Xavi Gallindo	Husaberg	11
5	Ben Hemmingway	KTM	11
6	Andy Cripps	Gas Gas	11
7	Gavin Houson	Husaberg	11
8	Michael Vukcevic	Sherco	11
9	Richard Ellwood	KTM	10
10	Gerhard Forster	Husqvarna	10

EXPERT

1	Gary Jenkins	KTM	10 laps
2	Scott Austin	KTM	10
3	Jack Lee	Gas Gas	10
4	Owain Humphreys	KTM	10
5	Sam Myers	KTM	10
6	Pascal Berlingieri	KTM	9
7	Gavin Johnston	KTM	8
8	Ryan Staveley	Husaberg	9
9	Damien Butler	Suzuki	9
10	Tom Potter	Gas Gas	8

CLUBMAN

1	Alan Marks	KTM	5 laps
2	Nathan Bolton	KTM	5
3	Jane Daniels	KTM	5
4	James Reeve	KTM	5
5	Ian McHahon	KTM	5

VETERAN

1	Kieran Hankin	Sherco	5 laps
2	Mark Houson	KTM	5
3	Craig Parkes	KTM	5
4	Chris Ball	KTM	5
5	Colin Blunt	KTM	4

SPEED TRIALS

1	Guy Kendrew	Ossa	6 laps
2	Josh Law	Gas Gas	6
3	Ian Robinson	Gas Gas	6
4	Nigel Crelin	Gas Gas	6
5	Stuart Day	Montesa	6



After three hard hours in the saddle the strain shows on Bolts' face



Expert class runner
Luke Copestake



Gethin Humphreys gets a helping hand



"I couldn't believe the mistakes I was making. Then I got into it a bit more at the end, started clawing back, got some good lines and made a good job of it. It's miles better than Nantmawr, the quarry's made for it. It's a bit rocky in places and it's a lot slipperier than it looks."

For Letti the third step on the podium is still a bloody good day at the office – especially since he's without a back brake from his second lap onwards.

"I had a very good start and felt comfortable on the bike on this pretty fast track," explains the German. "Passing an Expert class rider in the second lap I suddenly had to change line to avoid a collision, hit a rock and recognised I had lost the handle of the rear brake."

"The track was basically a continuous up and down and without the rear brake it was hard and pretty much impossible to go at the same speed as Jarvis. But I did my best and there were some scary moments in some downhills since I had to stall the engine to achieve some brake effect."

"Paul was getting closer and it was a real challenge to push even harder in the last laps. In a corner I had a little crash so Paul passed me. Considering the loss of the rear brake and two instead of one pit stops I am happy with the result."

Running the sort of pace that would have earned him a top 10 finish in the Pro class, eight-time Welsh trials champion Gary Jenkins is first Expert rider home. With some BEC experience to his name, Gary's mix of technical trials skills and cross country speed help him to go one better than his runner-up finish in last year's T1.

"My trials background definitely helped," grins Gary. "The first hour I had real bad armpump but it settled down a bit and then the last half-hour was a nightmare – I snapped my clutch and kept stalling and having stupid little crashes. I made it harder than it should have been but I managed to dig deep and I'm glad to win it, real happy."



Tommy Searle starts 2011
as our best bet for a
world champion



© Kripress

Spaniard Jonathan Barragan's
yet to realise his full potential



Expect Shaun Simpson to find
his way onto an MX1 podium
at least once this year



Have KTM made a mistake
by pairing big-bike specialist
Max Nagl with their 350?
Time will tell...

GLADIATORS!

THIS SUMMER A SELECTION OF THE WORLD'S MOST HIGHLY SKILLED AND PHYSICALLY PRIMED ATHLETES ARE SET TO SCRAP IT OUT IN BLOODY BATTLE, LAYING THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE FOR NOTHING MORE THAN A BIT OF GLORY AND THE CHANCE TO SAY 'I AM THE BEST'...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

Since 1957 the FIM Motocross World Championship has been sorting out the winners from the wannabes and over the years no fewer than 65 racers have managed to claim a championship title or more. This year four more champions will be crowned – MX1, MX2, MX3 and WMX – and although some may be won by riders who are already on that list of world championship winners the 250F

class will definitely be won by a newbie.

Whichever athlete it is that picks up the title at the end of the summer will know they've worked for it because between now and then 30 35-minute plus two lap motos must be fought out – that's over 21 hours of bar-to-bar race action on some of the globe's most gruelling terrain. Let's take a look at some of the leading contenders in the MX1 and MX2 classes...



MX1

The perennially packed out MX1 class is supremely stuffed with talent this year with all eight of 2010's moto winners back again and baying for another blast of glory. And joining those great eight are an equal number of athletes who've either tasted MX1 GP success in the past or more recently down in the MX2 division. So that's 16 proven winners right there and there's at least three more guys I can think of who are also ready to strike but of those 19 who's packing the most heat?

Four-time and reigning world champion Antonio Cairoli must start as the favourite to capture the crown again this year. A winner of 15 motos and eight GPs in 2010, the speedy Sicilian eventually tied up the title with 88 points to spare despite notching up a double DNF at the final round in Fermo. Armed with KTM's revolutionary 350 once more, only a brave man would bet against TC taking title number five in 2011.

Runner-up in last year's title chase, Clement Desalle must start the year as favourite to stop the Italian winning machine if anyone can. The MX Panda begins his second season with Sylvain Geboers' factory Suzuki squad and has been in fine form in the pre-season internationals picking up overall wins at Hawkstone Park and Valence. Whether the 21-year-old Belgian can stick it to the Sicilian in Sevlievo and beyond remains unknown but as Clement matures he appears to be getting quicker and more consistent too.

The 2008 world champ, David Philippaerts ended 2010 in the bronze medal position after an up and down season results wise but one in which he at least finished and scored points in every

moto – a feat that only he and Steve Ramon could manage in MX1. Still with Michele Rinaldi's Monster Yamaha team – for the fourth year in a row – the 27-year-old knows his machinery intimately, how to get the best from the team and most importantly what it takes to win. He's beaten Cairoli already in pre-season races this year but doing it over the course of the full world championship might be an ask too far.

A mid-season collarbone injury stopped Max Nagl from showing us what he was truly capable of in 2010 and I reckon that a move to the 350 is going to have a similar effect this season. As a truly masterful 450 rider who's able to exploit big-bore machinery brilliantly, KTM's decision to put him out on an oversize 250F seems like a dumb move to me and if pre-season results are anything to go by then it most definitely is. Max is a master at holeshotting and then running away with the race and he's been unable to do that on the 350 so far.

Old man of the pack Steve Ramon – the only grand prix rider in current service to be born in the '70s – is still running super-strong and doesn't seem to be slowing with age. In fact the opposite is probably true because The Bomb is definitely more technically proficient than he was when he won either of his world titles and he's still outrageously awesome at picking the right lines too. Ramon definitely has the potential to be a world champion again although I can't see it actually happening. I'll be happy to be proved wrong though...

So that's the fastest five from last year's series but who else is hot? Ken De Dycker's the kinda guy who can run 1-1 one week and 18-DNF the next so although he's not a true

>>

© Freeman G.





Reigning world MX1 champion
Antonio Cairoli starts the
season favourite to make it
three titles on the trot

championship challenger as such he's definitely gonna make like Luke Skywalker and have his presence felt. The hot rumour out of Belgium at the moment is that Keeno's having major technical issues with his LS Motors Honda not lasting race distance during practice sessions although like most pre-season gossip that's probably just a crock o' s**t!

Tanel Leok's year is sure to be turbulent as the Estonian Express pairs up with the factory TM team. The kind of rider who can ride the wheels off any works bike, let's hope Tanel doesn't run the fast but fragile TM into the ground. If everything can hold together for the full 40-odd minutes there's a good chance the 25-year-old will win at least one moto this season and that would be TM's first major win on the motocross world stage.

After a stellar year with CAS, Evgeny Bobryshev gets elevated to the full factory Honda team for 2011 where he'll represent red alongside Rui Goncalves. The former Martin team had a shocking year in 2010 with Jimmy Albertson and will definitely be looking to make amends for that mistake but will Bobby fit in as

well with the Italian stallions as he did with Princey and the boys? Only time will tell.

Moving up from MX2 to MX1 will definitely be difficult for Steven Frossard and Shaun Simpson but they're both big old boys and hard workers too so they should get to grips with the change pretty damn quickly. In fact Frossard's already got to grips with the factory 450 Yamaha he'll be racing alongside DP19 in the Monster-backed team and the 23-year-old is looking forward to a new challenge after finishing third in last year's MX2 title chase.

Simpson's coming off the back of two injury-wrecked years with the factory KTM team and the move to LS Motors Honda and the MX1 class will be like a breath of fresh air for the freshly bearded Scotsman. Woody's pre-season performances have been workmanlike and strong and if he can get out of the gate regularly well like he did in 2008 is sure to reach the podium once or twice before the season is up.

Jason Dougan's another hard-working British battler who's capable of running near the front of the pack although he's never quite managed to pull it together at grand prix level. A highly

talented rider who's in great physical condition, Dougan's armed with an awesome bike courtesy of Steve Dixon and the boys so could well give British fans abroad something to shout about.

As well as Simpson and Doogs, British battlers include HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK's Graeme Irwin and JK Datch Aprilia's Alfie Smith who'll be hoping to put points on the scoreboard for the first time in his short career. Still only 18, the plucky pint-sized prize-fighter is definitely more physically suited to the MX2 class but will line up with the fo-fiddys once more.

Making wily wildcard appearances throughout the season will be Proppa.com KTM team-mates Martin Barr and Nez Parker who currently hope to race the Valkenswaard, St Jean, Agueda, La Baneza, Gaeldorf, Lommel and Matterley Basin rounds of the series. While the step-up to GP level will push Parker to new levels for Barr it will be a cracking opportunity to show what he's really capable of on the world stage. Remember, Barty ran Ramon ragged at Hawkstone for a good while and also holeshot the second moto in front of the factory bikes on the NME-tuned three-five-oh!



Steven Frossard is adapting well to the 450

RACES IN PLACES!

THE 2011 MXGP SUPER SCHEDULE

Getting overseas to a GP has never been easier thanks to the bus-like services of budget airlines and the awesome deals travel agents like Nutt Travel – www.nutttravel.com – can hook you up with on ferry crossings. Okay, so fuel costs an arm and a leg but the pleasure you get from witnessing a motocross grand prix in a foreign land is frikin' priceless. Here's a quick run down on where you can see the world's motocross elite this summer...

ROUND 1 – SEVLIEVO, BULGARIA. APRIL 10

The long trip in the direction of the Black Sea is actually well worth it because the Bulgarians put on one hell of an opener to the GP season. Sevlievo has some massive jumps, huge climbs and long fast descents and that makes it one of the more viewer-friendly circuits on the GP calendar although the atmosphere is sometimes lacking as the Bulgarian crowd can be quite sparse. Still, if you fancy visiting one of the world's most up-to-date motocross facilities in an old-school Eastern European setting where you can still get a good meal and a beer or two for less than a fiver then Sevlievo is well worth the trip!

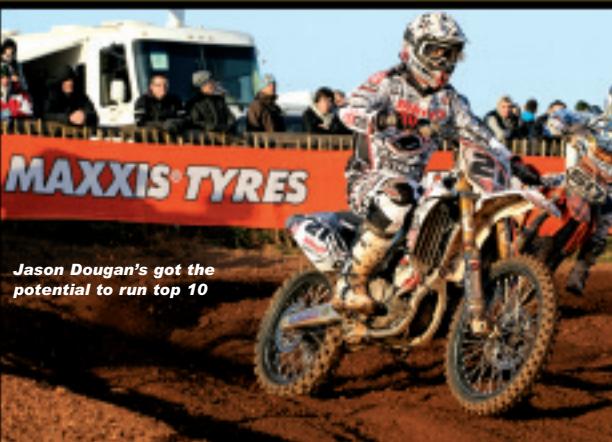
RND 2 – VALKENSWAARD, HOLLAND. APRIL 25

Check your calendars folks and then check 'em again because the second round of the series really is going off on Easter Monday! One of the busiest GPs of the year, Valkenswaard is situated just south of Eindhoven and is bit of a rarity because this typically deep Dutch sand track atypically features a hill or two – albeit man-made ones! Getting there is easy enough as Ryanair and City Jet Airlines both fly to the closest airport which is Eindhoven. It's also well worth looking at flying into Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport and then hiring a car or even driving across from the UK – contact Billy Nutt at www.nutttravel.com for killer deals on ferry crossings.

ROUND 3 – GLEN HELEN, USA. MAY 15

The land of the free hosts round three and this promises to be a corker as the full US KTM factory team and Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto are already signed up to race against the world elite. Situated around 45 miles east of downtown LA just south of the junction between Interstate 15 and 215, this GP is easy as American pie to find and just as tasty. Check out flydrive deals on lastminute.com if you wanna see it live.

Clement Desalle is aiming to go one better in 2011



Jason Dougan's got the potential to run top 10

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IT'S A NO BRAINER





MX2

With the current king of MX2 – Marvin Musquin – headed Stateside for the foreseeable future the path's now clear for a brand-new MX2 world champion to stomp his authority all over the series in 2011. But who's it gonna be?

On first glance you'd say that Ken Roczen's the man who's most ready to stand up and claim that particular prize as the soon-to-be 17-year-old was Musquin's closest challenger in 2010 and is now armed with the latest incarnation of the awesome factory 250F KTM that has won the last three titles on the trot. So in theory there's nothing that can stand in the way of the freshly-equipped German wunderkind, right?

Wrong! You'd be silly to write off Roczen's younger team-mate Jeffrey Herlings who at 16 is now a year faster, stronger and wiser and then there's the team's elder statesmen Jeremy Van Horebeek who's still yet to show his true potential. But I reckon Roczen's biggest rival this year will actually

be Tommy Searle.

After two troublesome years spent racing in America it's easy to forget that Tommy's a two-time runner up in the MX2 world series and back then he regularly rattled the cage of Tony Cairoli – the man now considered to be the fastest racer on the planet. Think about it, if Tommy could give Tony C fits as an 18 and 19-year-old what's he capable of now he's a little stronger, way more experienced and armed with the world's fastest 250F? The only downside to riding the Pro Circuit-tuned CLS Kawasaki is that it seems to be a little fragile right now but hopefully they'll have that sorted out before Seville.

Tommy's team-mate Max Anstie knows what it takes to win and regularly spanked Roczen and Herlings as a nipper. The only thing Anstie is lacking at the moment is experience of racing tracks prepped the Youthstream way but it shouldn't take him too long to make the transition from wide-open AMA circuits back to tight and twisty FIM ones.

One rider who's had to make that very >>

ROUND 4 – INDAIATUBA, BRAZIL. MAY 22

The cost of this trip'll make your hair stand on end so I wouldn't even bother pricing it up unless you win the Euromillions. A very decent looking circuit awaits the world championship contenders who do make it to Brazil – let's just hope it translates well to television.

ROUND 5 – ST JEAN D'ANGELY, FRANCE. JUNE 5

No doubt the GP runners will be using the French round as a sneaky bit of practice for the MXdN that's held here in September around this epic hillside track that creates some awesome racing and also seems to suit the Brits! St Jean d'Angely is a great facility with plenty of good viewing that gets packed out by a very vocal and ever enthusiastic crowd so the atmosphere is usually great. Limoges is the local airport.

ROUND 6 – AGUEDA, PORTUGAL. JUNE 12

The Portuguese round of the series seems to be popular with British fans who annually flock to the Agueda circuit that's famous for its big jumps, elevation changes and bright red sandy soil. Overall viewing is good and the amphitheatre setting creates a great atmosphere with the fans – many of whom camp out in the adjacent woods. Agueda is not a million miles from either the Porto or Lisbon airports and is close to the beautiful Atlantic coast!

ROUND 7 – LA BANEZA, SPAIN. JUNE 19

Around 200 miles north of Agueda – and on the road back to the UK – La Baneza has hosted EMX2 championship rounds in the past and looks like it could be a good replacement for Belpuig given a little Youthstream loving. The circuit is situated right close to the town of La Baneza which itself is just south of Leon. Stansted to Santander or Bilbao seems to be the cheapest option for flyers.

ROUND 8 – UDDEVALLA, SWEDEN. JULY 3

Uddevalla is a track that's famous for the rock face that overlooks the entire circuit which is where most of the Scandinavian race fans perch themselves for the entire weekend! Quite slick and one-lined in places, the Swedish circuit actually provides plenty of good racing as passes take some planning and mistakes are easily made meaning riders swap positions almost continuously through the pack. Uddevalla is always packed out with northern European race fans and has a great party vibe!

ROUND 9 – TEUTSCHENTHAL, GERMANY. JULY 10

If you're a fan of great motocross, beer and sausage then this is one not to miss! Teutschenthal is one of the finer circuits for spectators in GP motocross as this tight, hardpack circuit is packed full of elevation changes and jumps! Situated in the east of the country, the facility still has an old communist charm and is infamous for its monster beer tent and Saturday night party! Fly into Leipzig then head west to Halle – Teutschenthal is just a stone's throw further!



Jeremy Van Horebeek is another rider yet to realise his full potential



Mighty Max Anstie's beaten Roczen and Herlings in the youth ranks

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ROUND 10 – KEGUMS, LATVIA. JULY 17

Kegums featured on the MX1/MX2 calendar for the first time in 2009 but has been a regular stop on the sidecarcross world championship circuit for ages. The sandy track is only 60km from Riga airport which makes it an easy and potentially cheap race to visit providing you can find the right flight from the UK.

ROUND 11 – LOMMEL, BELGIUM. JULY 31

Situated on the filthy backside of Lommel's industrial area, this circuit is a full-time practice facility that has an even deeper sand surface than the new track at FatCat! Very physically demanding, Lommel is situated just to the south east of Eindhoven no more than 10 miles from Valkenswaard.

ROUND 12 – LOKET, CZECH REPUBLIC. AUGUST 7

The coolest venue on the GP calendar has a real old-school vibe to it and is a firm fan favourite although the racers hate it – mostly due to the high speeds and gravelly track surface. Loket is around 90 miles from the country's capital of Prague and situated close to the spa town of Karlovy Vary that's well worth a visit and is recognisable from the awesome James Bond movie Casino Royale as well as the not so great Hostel 2!

ROUND 13 – MATTERLEY BASIN, UK. AUGUST 21

The home of the 2006 British grand prix and MXdN gets resurrected for 2011 thanks to the hard work of Steve Dixon – well done that man. Situated slap bang next to the A31 and just a stone's throw from the M3, Matterley Basin is a piece of piffle to get to and is undoubtedly one of the best tracks on the grand prix circuit. Be there or have a real good reason why you can't be!

ROUND 14 – GAILDORF, GERMANY. SEPTEMBER 4

Back on the schedule after a break of five years, the concrete-like high-speed circuit of Gaildorf gets dusted off and readied for action once more in 2011. If the world championships are going down to the wire this could be an epic but if it rains – which is a strong possibility in central Europe come September – it really won't be much fun for anyone. Fly-drivers need to get to Stuttgart and then prepare for a 90-minute meander north east.

ROUND 15 – FERMO, ITALY. SEPTEMBER 11

A tough old-school Italian hillside circuit with some brand-new facilities, Fermo made its comeback to the GP calendar in 2010 after a 21-year lay-off. Not quite as good as everyone was hoping, the Fermo finale was still a decent enough race and it's back again to host the final round in 2011. Fermo is only around an hour's drive from Ancona airport so it's not too difficult to get there either...

KTM have another potential champ in the shape of Jeffrey Herlings

The boy king? Just about to turn 17, Ken Roczen's got the world at his feet

gp preview



© Freeman G.

same adjustment and with a lot of success is current British MX2 champ Zach Osborne who's entering his third full year of MX2 world championship action on Steve Dixon's potently-tuned Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha. The West Virginian finished fourth in last year's title chase with a second in Glen Helen behind Musquin his best moto finish.

Joining Osborne on the BICWWY squad for 2011 is Swiss whiz kid Arnaud Tonu who ended the 2010 season only seven points but three places behind his new team-mate. Proudly running the #7 this year, Arnaud's definitely been on the pace in the pre-season internationals and could quite possibly be the big surprise of this year's championship.

French former BMX world champ Gautier Paulin lines up on the factory Monster Yamaha again in 2011 after a season wrecked by injury saw him place only 10th last year. Once considered to be

the next big thing, the recently turned 21-year-old is capable of winning races but seems to lack the mental strength to put together a full season.

Jake Nichols' hopes of being a regular top-10 runner this season were crushed when he broke his lower leg during a practice session. The Reverend will definitely miss the first four rounds of the series while he recovers from the spiral fracture but team-mate Jordan Booker will fly the flag for Roger Magee's team in his absence.

The MVR-D boys are back again for another punt at GP glory with Latvia's #1 Sideshow Bob impersonator Matiss Karro and Zimbabwe's Sean Mitchell. While Karro improved to 16th in last year's championship he's definitely capable of way more and seems to be gelling well with the team's new Honda steeds. A top 10 finish to the championship definitely isn't out of the question.

Brit-based Yank Zach Osborne should be running up front

© yamaha-racing.com





Martin Craven(dale) pictured in happier times at Back Cwm...

PREPPIN' FOR PUNISHMENT!

WHILE GODFREY'S TAKEN A TUMBLE THAT'LL KEEP HIM OFF THE TOUGH ONE STARTLINE THERE'S STILL A BIKE TO PREP FOR SOME T1 ABUSE...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Sutty

With my effed up elbow stopping me from making my annual pilgrimage oop naaarth for The Tough One the Baron and Dawg at DBR HQ had to find themselves another sucker to take one for the team and race in this super-tough epic. Step up Martin Craven(dale) who rather lastminute.com said he'd ride our RMX450Z so long as we fitted a Rekluse clutch first. Simples.

Now Rekluse clutches certainly aren't for everyone but apparently Martin's a fan so he hit up UK importer CI Sport who packaged and posted up a Z-Start Pro. Automatic clutches work by using centrifugal force to push steel balls up rampways to automatically engage the drive. The balls retract and the clutch disengages when the RPMs slow and so by fitting the Z-Start Pro you eliminate any chance of stalling the motor but the clutch lever can still be used to kill the drive at higher revs so there's still some amount of control there.

When you open the box it comes in you automatically think s***e, this is gonna be one

complicated mutha to fit but it's actually surprisingly simple if you follow the instructions to the absolute word. If you have got one yourself and you still need a little extra coaching log on to the DBR Digital Vault at www.dirtbikerider.com and hunt down the September 2007 edition where I go through the ins and out of fitting one from start to finish. Unlike Tibet it's all free so go on, go on, go on and indulge yerself...

With the clutch all fitted and working as Rekluse intended after less than one hour it was time to bolt-on some goodies we've been waiting to test for some time now to see how they'd stand up to an afternoon of torture at The Tough One.

The first item on our list was a pair of Hollis Wheels that you might have seen on show at Stoneleigh last autumn. A pair of these trick looking wheels with 6061 T6 aluminium hubs retail for less than £400 which begs the question how good can they actually be? The guys at Hollis reckon they're incredibly durable and that Jack Brunell has been



using a pair at all of the winter SX races. They certainly look the business and it'll be interesting to see how they hold up to some DBR-style abuse this summer. We picked up the wheels from Hollis HQ where former GP spanner spinner Bob Bratcher kindly fitted tyres and mousses – now that's what you call good service right there!

But before we could fit the Hollis wheels to the race machine we had to remove the discs from the stock RMX hubs. This proved to be a massive ballache as the Allen bolts that held 'em on seemed to be stamped out of some kind of cheese and the heads rounded off as soon as they were touched. After a lot of sweatin' and a swearin' Sutty eventually beat 'em off (laff!) and we were good to go after getting hold of some new bolts.

A pair of super-tough steel Sunstar sprockets were also fitted to replace the low-quality stockers along with an all-new DC MXZ QX-Ring gold chain – how bling does that sound? By my reckoning that

chain/sprocket combo should survive The Tough One and around 40 hours or more riding which will be ample considering the DBR wrecking crew are currently all wrecked themselves one way or another – good work there fellas...

The final aftermarket part to bolted onto the RMX for The Tough One is a LeoVince silencer. The stocker not only weighs a bloody ton but is bloody loud too so it just has to go. The LeoVince is a real work of art and sounds super-sweet while passing sound-test way below the 94dB limit. LeoVince claim that their Durapaq packing material should last a good 50 hours – even under racing conditions – so that's a bolt-on and forget about it part if ever there was one.

So with a freshly prepped puppy how did Martin C get on in the race? Not too well I'm afraid as some small set-up issues unfortunately meant he had to DNF early on.

Bad times...

WALKER'S FIVE-MINUTE FIX

BLAKE BREEDING AND FRUID REPRACEMENT MADE EASY...

Replacing brake fluid is one of those jobs that everyone puts off because it all seems like a bit of a chore. But seriously it really doesn't have to be that way and I can show you a simple tip that'll make replacing the fluid and then bleeding the system seem like the simplest thing on earth. Actually, make that the second simplest thing on earth. Laff!

Make sure the master cylinder is level with the ground and then remove the cover. Now use a syringe and hose to suck out the majority of the fluid and then dispose of it in a safe container. Clean your syringe and hose out and then draw some fresh fluid into it. Dot 5.1 fluid works best but Dot 4 will do.

Attach an 8mm ring spanner to the bleed nipple, then pop the syringe's tube on there. Undo the nipple and squeeze the fluid into the brake system. Just before the syringe runs dry tighten up the nipple.

Now re-empty the master cylinder. To completely change the fluid in the system you'll have to do this at least three or four times. The final time you fill the system, nip up the nipple, check the fluid level and then test the feel of the brake. It should be p-p-p-perfect.

If it's not try bleeding the system the traditional way by squeezing the lever a few times, holding it in and then undoing the nipple to let any air out. When you've done that to your satisfaction top up the master cylinder with brake fluid, put the lid back on and enjoy the feel of your freshly fettled stoppers. Job done!



COOPER'S AMAZING FINALE
MUST CLINCHES THE
1990 AMA 125 NATIONAL
TITLE AT UNADILLA!



SUPER FLY GUY!

AMONG THE STARS CELEBRATING LAST DECEMBER'S GENEVA SX
SILVER ANNIVERSARY WAS AMERICAN WILD MAN GUY 'AIRTIME' COOPER
— A FIRM FAN-FAVOURITE WHO WAS BORN TO ENTERTAIN...

Words and photos by **Jack Burnicle**

Geneva has quietly become one of the most enduring and successful European supercrosses. Sited in the huge Palexpo exhibition complex alongside the city's international airport, the Swiss classic last December celebrated its 25th birthday.

'Kings of Geneva' have included many American luminaries. Ron Lechien was the first in 1987 and Jeff Stanton, Larry Ward, Damon Bradshaw and Jeremy McGrath have all featured since. But one silver anniversary guest finished twice second before ascending the throne in 1989 and subsequently won the world SX title there in 1993.

Guy 'Airtime' Cooper was something of an iconic US outcast. Universally adored by fans, yet largely ignored by factories, 'Cooperman' always placed full-blooded showmanship ahead of any desperate American need to be a winner at all costs. And even after he did win the 1990 US 125cc Nationals in an enthralling finale no decent deal was forthcoming!

"We're entertainers!" he insisted to me back then. "Winning is great. If you can win factories

will hire you for big dollars even if you have a terrible personality and no attitude. I have a friendly attitude and don't key on winning so much as showing the sport is fun. We older riders got into it because we liked it, not to make millions. It's in your heart. You mustn't forget those roots!"

Guy's parents owned a motorcycle and bicycle shop in unfashionable Stillwater, Oklahoma. His older brother Chuck raced while Guy played on pushbikes. From 14 until 18 he worked in his dad's shop. "I was small for my age [he never grew higher than five foot six!] but good at jumping and trick riding," he grins infectiously. "With three brothers and four sisters it was a family weekend out when Chuck raced. I had my Tonka trucks and my Honda 50!"

Later, if he behaved, he got to borrow bikes and rode enduros and trials — "as long as I didn't tear them up, which I did — a lot!" — then in 1980 he used a '78 250 Honda to ride a local motocross and rushed home to tell his parents "I love this sport!" Within three weeks he'd moved into the experts. "But I could never finish. I kept breaking the bike — completely in two one

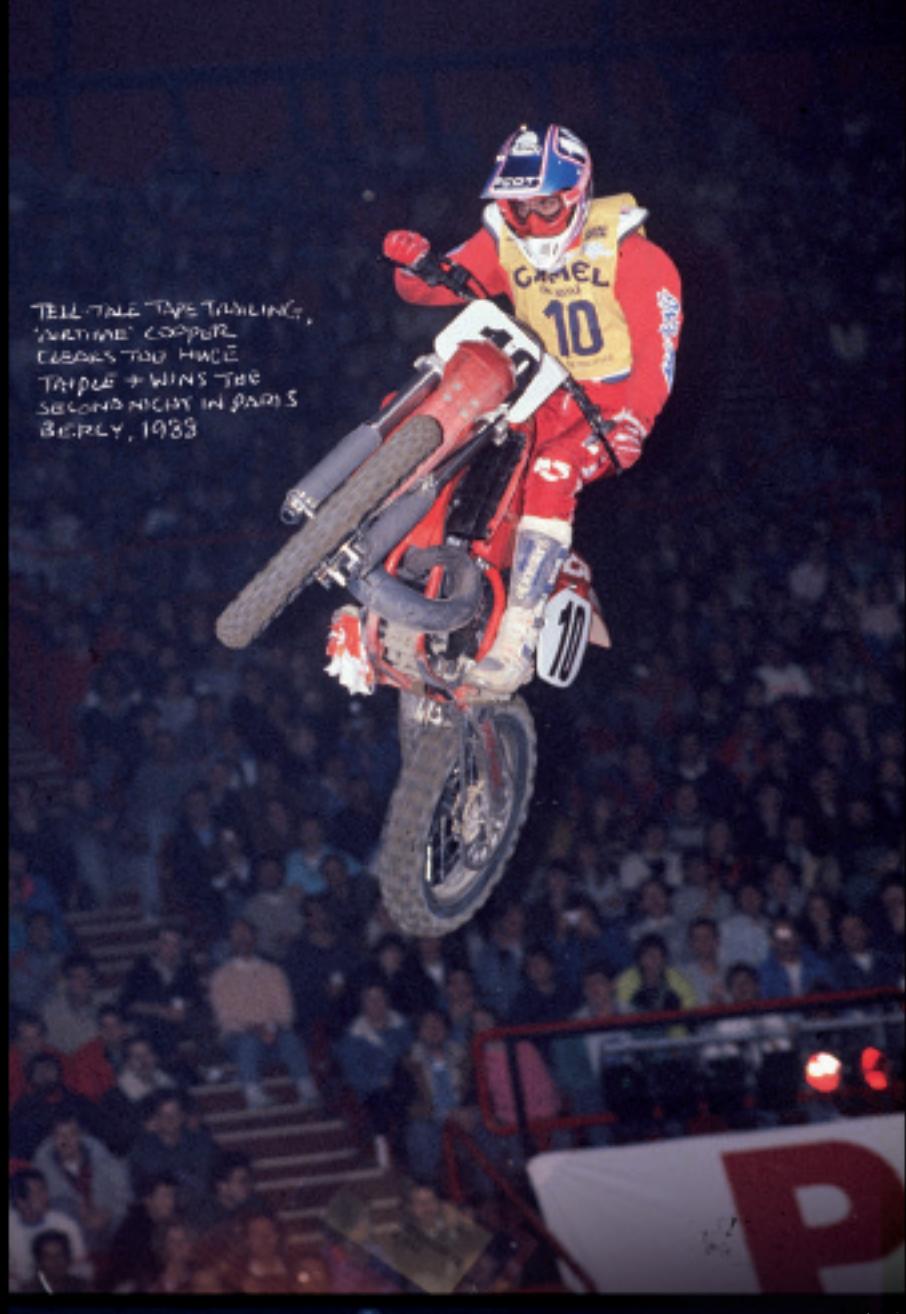
time off a big jump. I was jumping everything — a madman!"

Chuck was smooth, consistent, quiet and unnoticed. His kid brother wanted some attention. "From Oklahoma, nobody knew me. So when I was in the air I'd rev the bike. It became known as the 'Cooperev'!"

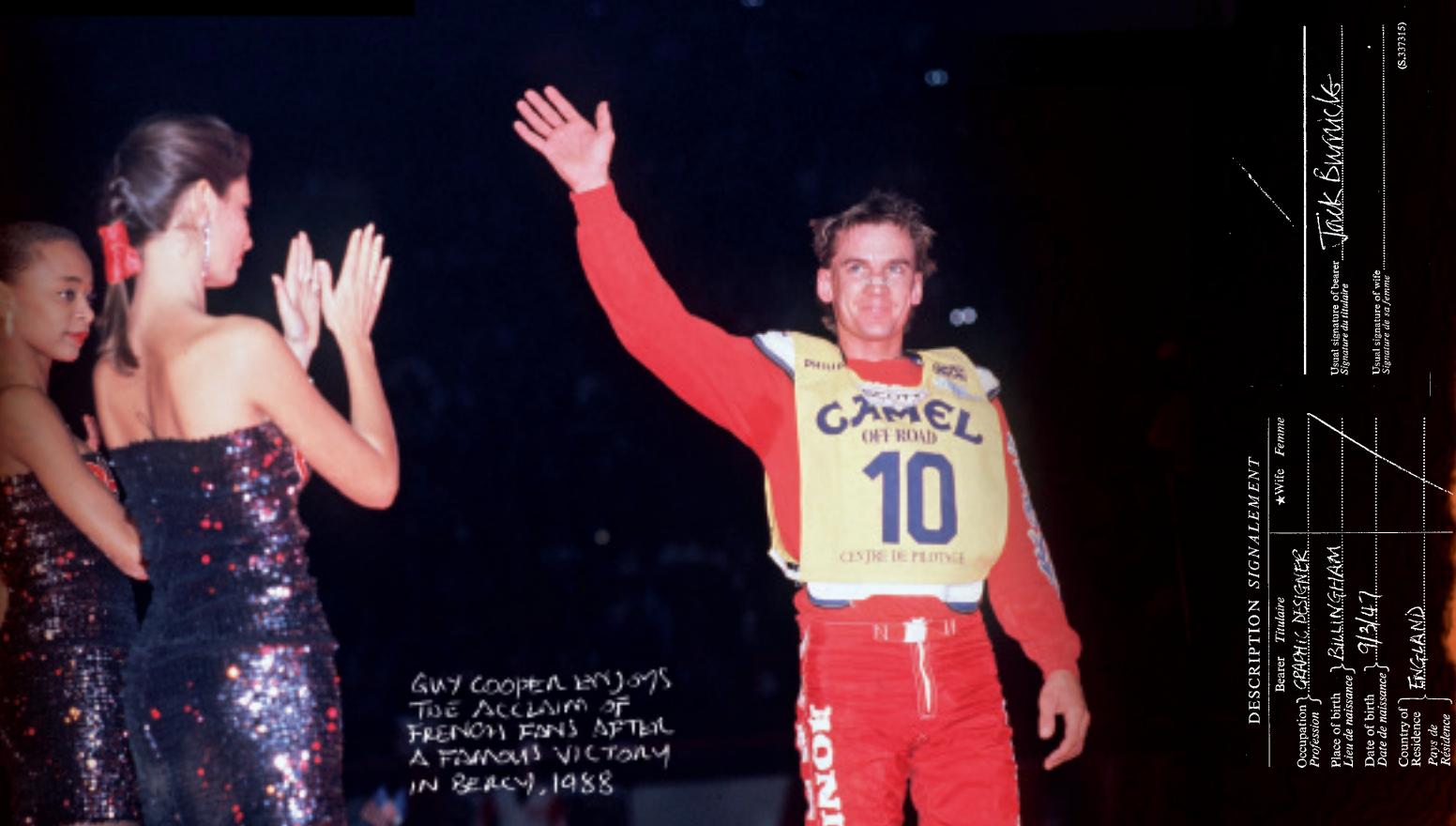
At the Ponca City amateur championships at the end of '81 Cooper traded in the much-abused Honda for a 250 Kawasaki, kept crashing — "but I was fast!" — and picked up a two-year Team Green support ride. Then he was sidelined by a broken shoulder. Doctors said his racing days were over so he partied hard for six months. "The biggest thing I learned was you can't be number one at partying because the best die. Not too much showing off you can do there!"

He tried riding again and at Ponca City in 1983, having already applied to join the fire service, got an offer from Honda for bikes and \$4000 parts and expenses. "It was incredible to me. I thought I had a factory ride. I had no idea how much a factory actually spent on a rider!"

He married first wife Jayni and they hit the >>



TELL-TALE TAPE TRAINING,
'WARTIME' COOPER
DEBARS TOO HURRY
TRIPLE + WINS THE
SECOND NIGHT IN PARIS
BERCY, 1988



GUY COOPER ENJOYS
THE ACCLAIM OF
FRENCH FANS AFTER
A FAMOUS VICTORY
IN BERCY, 1988

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JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

Jack Burnicle

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GUY 'AIRTIME'
COOPER (SUZUKI)
WINS 1993 WORLD
SUPERCROSS 125cm³
IN GENEVA

National trail in 1984. Cooper earned eighth overall and 'rookie of the year', he and Jayni travelling in a van and Guy doing his own spannering. Again eighth in the 1985 125 Nationals, he improved to fifth in '86 (second Honda behind champion Micky Dymond), won his first pro moto on a stock bike at Southwick and made an enormous impact leaping a huge triple at the Pontiac Superdrome in Michigan! He also ventured into Europe for world supercross's predecessor the Nicolas Rodil Trophy and Manchester's Belle Vue stadium meeting where a young Sutty saw Airtime in action and remembers his mum gasping at Guy's already radical whips!

The following year he was top privateer in the US 125 series (third behind Dymond) and won his first overall at Kenworthy in Ohio after placing joint sixth in the 250 SX championship – again second Honda to runner-up Ricky Johnson. Offered a half-decent Honda deal for 1988, Cooper promptly broke his leg at the Antwerp SX. Out for six months, he missed the opening rounds of the 125 Nationals but bounced back in superb shape, conquering his first race back at Lake Sugar Tree, Virginia. He won three more rounds and mounted the rostrum at all the rest to finish an amazing third in the series, only a point behind runner-up Donny Schmit. Then came a mighty, memorable second night at Paris Bercy when Cooperman, the only rider clearing a tricky tabletop-triple combo, became the first privateer to triumph in the French capital – beating Matiashevich, Johnson, Ward, Lechien and Bayle!

Still only a Honda support rider for 1989,

Cooper lay second behind new champ Jeff Stanton before the final AMA 250 supercross showdown in the LA Coliseum but suffered a broken collarbone and Lechien snatched runner-up spot by six points. He also finished third in the 125 Nationals behind duelling young guns Mike Kiedrowski and Damon Bradshaw, yet Honda had no room for him in 1990 with the arrival of Bayle so he signed for Bob Hannah at Suzuki – his salary still only half those of Mike LaRocco and, er, Ronnie Tichenor...

Cooper and Bayle then went head-to-head in those 125 Nationals, the slim, svelte world champion against the tenacious Oklahoma terrier. "I had fun when we were in heated battle because I was the underdog," he grins. "We got on really well. We could race side-by-side with respect for each other, though he would grant me a bit of caution because I was a wild rider!"

Then Bayle broke his arm at Gainsville and, handed a 62-point lead, Cooper fell apart! He just couldn't ride defensively. It was completely alien to him! Pressure built up until that gripping final round at Unadilla where, neck and neck with Kiedrowski, Cooper could once more throw caution to the wind and won the first moto to take a four-point buffer into the second race. But the front end washed out early on, he crashed downfield and, with champion-elect Kiedrowski leading, Cooper thrashed his way back to second place and the title – by a single point. At 28 it made him the oldest champ in AMA history!

Yet Suzuki still favoured under-achieving youngsters and offered their first champ in eight years another relatively paltry contract. A 16-time

1993 WORLD
SUPERCROSS CHAMPION
GUY COOPER IS
ENTERTAINED IN GENEVA



AMA National winner, Cooper finished top six in the 1992 SX series and seventh in the 125 Nationals before lifting the first round of the 1993 world supercross championship in Gothenburg.

Scoring consistently in Amsterdam, Barcelona and Tokyo, Guy arrived in Geneva with an unassailable advantage and, typically, went for it! Demonstrating a brand new 'can-can' he and McGrath had perfected on Guy's practice track, he had the crowd on its feet and shrieking in anticipation of his antics every astounding lap! He started badly in the final then whipped past overpaid Suzuki stablemates Denny Stephenson and Tichenor in one lap. The stadium absolutely exploded. He buried Steve Lamson by flying head-high past the Honda and, with leader Larry Ward in sight, hit neutral in the whoops and sailed over the bars!

Cooper remounted to retrieve fourth and was garlanded in a huge Stars and Stripes on the rostrum. He even found a new fan in the shape of admiring Formula One world champion Alain Prost. They discussed winning, retirement and comebacks and 31-year-old Cooper, still unable to secure a firm factory commitment for 1994, decided to make Geneva his glorious last stand.

One of the sport's outstanding entertainers receded into the GNCC cross-country series and other off-road ventures while developing the fabled 'Cooperland' riding facility at his home in Oklahoma – a venue enjoyed over the years by playmates like McGrath, Stanton and Bayle.

Now 48, he's married to Wanda and they have a daughter. I just hope she knows how cherished her dad was around the world!

To be as successful as James Stewart
you've got to hate losing as much as you
love winning



NO SURRENDER!

WHAT MOTIVATES JAMES STEWART TO PUSH THE LIMITS TO THE POINT THAT HE CRASHES HIS BRAINS OUT, THEN GETS STRAIGHT BACK UP AND PUSHES THEM AGAIN?

Not everybody likes James Stewart. People have said plenty of negative things about him over the years – including me – but the one thing you can never question about the San Manuel Yamaha racer is his competitive drive. The guy just flat-out can't stand losing. And it's this inability to accept anything but first place that earns him one of his most popular criticisms – that he crashes too much. Well, maybe he does or maybe he crashes the correct amount for how fast he tries to go on a dirt bike every single time he's on it.

It's easy to forget that James Stewart is only 25 years old. He made his debut in 2002 literally weeks after his 16th birthday and he won't turn 26 until December of this year. Just because he has been around – and winning – for a decade it makes it tough to remember his true age. But as he's grown older, he's grown wiser. Yeah, so not everyone likes James Stewart but he's okay with that now.

"People booed Ricky [Carmichael] and he was the Greatest Of All Time and they still booed him," Stewart says. "And I think Ricky was [booed] worse than I was at one point. It happened to [Jeremy] McGrath! I remember at the Nationals people had signs saying 'Mama's Boy' and all these different things. And it's happening to Dungey now – last

year, he was the golden boy...

"I hear people booing him [Dungey] and it's like 'whoa buddy,'" Stewart says. "But, like I said, you know it's just part of the sport. And the races are selling out right now. Daytona was good. Atlanta was packed. And for me, I'm in a spot in my life that I can really come out and stand in front of 60,000 people and say 'let me showcase my talents, let me show what I can do on a motorcycle'. That's what I'm out to do."

While the boos still bother him – and you can see the reaction on his face when it happens – Stewart has perspective on it now.

"This is what it is. We get paid millions of dollars to go race a motorcycle and win and all but that's not it," Stewart says. "Also, we get paid millions of dollars for people to be fans and not be fans. That's why we get paid. And so you can't have the cake and ice cream at the same time, you know? All you can do is when they walk away and you go home at night, you can say to yourself 'I can live with whatever happened there'. And so far this season, except for one race, I can say that."



Cycle News has struck out on his own to do the freelance thing. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is a Glock-pakkin', raccoon-shootin', gungho American MX journo – think Hunter S Thompson with a moto-habit – who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from defunct US weekly

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On it at Indy...



Bubba's bravery at Daytona was recognised by a standing ovation from the crowd

This isn't something Stewart has had a handle on forever. He had a few years of pretty heavy negativity about what goes on around him – not just because of people who are fans or not but also because of people who are racists. And they exist – I've witnessed racist remarks thrown at Stewart on multiple occasions in the pits. And he ignores it. He also won't address it in interviews. It's as if he doesn't want those people to realise he even notices them. But he has figured out that he's not going to make everybody happy.

"Last year people were coming up to me and asking 'hey, are you quitting?' or I'd have somebody standing in line for an hour just to tell me I suck," Stewart says. "Then you realise 'damn, I'm pretty good if this guy is going to waste an hour of his life just to tell me that'. It's just like the people who make the signs saying 'Dungey this' and 'Chad this' and 'James that' – they took the time out of their life to do that for me. Whether they hate me or like me,

they're thinking about me.

"I get paid a lot of money and so do all these guys out here and we're paid to be criticised or loved and all that and that's why they come buy the tickets. And if they hated us all that bad then the seats would be empty. I understand that. There are a lot more people coming to the race this year and there's a lot more excitement coming because of me, because of Ryan and all that stuff. The stadiums, they don't lie. They show it. The media turn-out shows it. So it's good. The sponsors are into it. And like I said, I'm just happy to be a part of it."

Imagine the kind of heart it takes to go down as often and as hard as James Stewart has throughout his career and still go just as fast the next time. Stewart has hit the deck a few times this year – including in Jacksonville where he had to DNF a race for the first time in a very long time – but the race that defines him came two weeks

prior to Jacksonville in Daytona.

To break it down for you, his first two timed laps in the Main Event – which were actually laps two and three of the race – Stewart put in times of 1:15.5 and 1:15.6. The next closest lap time in the race was a 1:17.3 by Ryan Villopoto and not a single other rider even made it into the 1:17s! They were all 1:18 and higher. On the fourth lap of the race Stewart made a costly error and wheelied into the face of a seat-bounce triple and went over the bars bad. "It was just a mistake," Stewart says. "Anybody who rides could've or would've made the same mistake. I got a little more traction than I thought and I just missed it by a little bit."

The result was that Stewart was tossed onto the ground but he got up – nearly a lap down – and then went back to work. With Villopoto a few seconds from lapping him for the whole race, Stewart went out and still put in a 1:17.6 on a bent-up bike and many of his laps were faster

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than Villopoto's. He caught up to ninth place and the crowd went nuts when he crossed the line as the last guy Villopoto didn't lap.

"I guess I got to showcase something besides my skills on a dirt bike when I got up," Stewart says. "I got to say 'I'm not going to quit on this thing'. And, yeah, I was hurting. I really felt it right after I got out of the race. And then Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and even into the next week I was pretty banged up. But it is what it is. And for me the championship is not lost, for sure. I'm actually doing way better than most people predicted anyway."

Stewart credits his dad with his drive. He says his dad is why he never gives up. "It's the same way I've been racing my whole career – just, you know, my dad never taught me to quit," Stewart says. "And, trust me, part of me wanted to quit even last weekend [in Indianapolis] too after the first five laps because I rode horrible. I was five, six seconds behind third place at one point. It was tough.

"But Daytona was just special because when I got up I could hear the crowd going on. And then for me it was just, like I said, my dad told me never to quit and I felt like I could still walk and I wanted to do it. I knew it would take me a few laps to get everything situated and I just knew that if I got 15th that would be pretty good. I got my way back up to ninth. But it was cool to cross the chequered flag and get the standing [ovation]. And I don't think I would have gotten that even if I'd have won the race."

But is it really his dad? Or is it something you either have or don't? "I guess since I was a kid it's been like that," Stewart says. "And I think the reason why I get bummed and upset is just because, you know, it's different when you feel like you lucked into something. It's cool and I've had some lucky breaks for sure, including coming out of that Daytona crash okay. I get mad because I know I should have won that race, you know? And I was clearly the best guy. At least I felt like I was but I didn't win. And so I get frustrated with that.

"But, yeah, my dad, at Daytona he said 'I thought you were coming in'. And I asked 'well, would you have been okay with that?' and he was like 'yup, 100 per cent'. But I'm not going to stop like that, you know? Especially to be where I'm at in my career. I'm blessed to have money and everything I want so it's not about money to me. It's about racing and I couldn't stomach pulling off – I would have had to be still lying there before I give up. Same thing with the Asterisk Mule. Man, I hurt so bad but there's no way I'm getting on that thing. You save that for people who can't get up, not for the people that hurt but possibly can walk. It's just not me."

And in Jacksonville Stewart faced that scenario down only two days after this interview was conducted. After dominating his heat race he went down just past the first turn in the Main Event with Matt Goerke and a couple of other riders and this time he couldn't get up. But true to his hard-earned reputation he returned for Toronto. Why? Because he still has a shot at the title... 



James Snr's taught his son never to quit



SLINGS AND ARROWS!

THERE'S SOME OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE GOING ON IN THE 2011 SX CHAMPIONSHIP WHERE CHAD REED CURRENTLY LEADS – BUT FOR HOW LONG?

In motocross championships of all sorts – and especially in AMA supercross – it usually doesn't take long before one racer is dominating everything. He wins and get confident and that leads to more wins and the more that guy wins the more the rest of the field loses confidence and that just helps the winning guy even more.

But in the 2011 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Championship this isn't how things have been. Every time one rider seems to have a stranglehold on the series they throw it away and then someone else starts to build up their own head of steam. As the series heads into its second half things are getting more crazy, not less...

DAYTONA

Daytona is the one weird race of the year. The lap times are always much longer and the track gets extremely rough – more like an outdoor race than a supercross event. But with a rough track designed not to have a good rhythm and with the deep ruts and other technical aspects, it's tracks like this that – as Ricky Carmichael (the track designer) puts it – "separate the men from the boys".

The night starts great for most of the top five contenders for the championship. Trey Canard, Ryan Villopoto, Chad Reed and James Stewart all easily qualify for the Main Event out of their heat races but Ryan Dungey's luck isn't so great. Dungey is fast in Daytona but after passing Villopoto for the lead of their heat race and then beginning to pull away something major lets go in his engine, punching a hole in the cases of his RM-Z450 and forcing him out of the race.

His team scrambles to put a new engine in the frame in time for the LCQ because according to AMA rules you have to race the same chassis as was submitted for tech inspection prior to the event, unless the

chassis itself is damaged beyond repair.

Dungey takes the last starting spot in the LCQ, starts just outside the top five and slowly and carefully works his way into the lead to win. Still, in the Main Event he's forced to take the 19th out of 20 gate picks which puts him on the far outside.

Off the start James Stewart grabs the holeshot while Ryan Villopoto quickly slots into the second spot. Reed runs about eighth and Dungey is forced off the track in the first turn but finishes the first lap in 10th. Canard, on the other hand, goes down on the opening lap with Ivan Tedesco and they round the lap in 19th and 20th.

Over the first three laps (laps two and three of which are timed), James Stewart puts on a riding clinic. Picking lines no-one else is even trying – such as using a small bump to step up and over a wall designed to slow everyone down – Stewart puts down a 1:15.5 and a 1:15.6 on the first two timed laps. The next closest lap time belongs, predictable, to Villopoto – a 1:17.3. Not a single other rider throughout the entire race even gets into the 1:17s besides Villopoto and he only does it twice in the same two laps where Stewart put in the 1:15s.

It's a purely dominant performance but on lap three it all goes wrong as Stewart mistakenly wheelies into a small jump and his front wheel misses the jump altogether, sending him over the bars violently. He's down for a whole lap but somehow remounts and heads back onto the circuit only 10-15 seconds in front of new race leader Villopoto.

For the next 17 laps Stewart puts in a heroic performance, staying the same distance in front of Villopoto until the chequered flag and finishing in ninth place as the last person on the lead lap. Villopoto's lead extends to 23 points over Stewart with the win. Reed ends up second and Dungey fights





It's been a mad month that's seen
Ryan Villopoto fail to make the
Main Event at Jacksonville and lose his
lead to Chad Reed

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his way all the way up to third.

In the Lites class Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Blake Baggett dominates, grabbing the holeshot and pulling away every lap until the chequered flag falls. Justin Barcia is second despite riding with a fractured wrist and Ryan Sipes is third. The other main championship contender, Dean Wilson, goes down twice on the second lap and fights his way back up to eighth at the finish.

INDIANAPOLIS

James Stewart catches and passes Ryan Villopoto in their heat race which seems to put to rest any idea that Stewart is still feeling bad from his fall in Daytona. But then in the Main Event Reed gets the holeshot over Villopoto, Tedesco, Dungey, Wey, Millsaps and Stewart. Canard goes down on the first lap again, trying to make too much happen all at once. He rounds the first lap in 18th.

Villopoto quickly passes Reed for the lead on the opening lap and begins to pull away. Reed is ill – although no-one knows this yet – and he seems content to let Villopoto have it. Within a few laps Ryan Dungey is pressuring Reed for second but Reed won't budge as easily for his former team-mate.

While they are battling, Stewart finds his way into fourth and begins to put the pressure on. First he passes Dungey at the halfway point, then only two laps later he gets Reed who seems to be out of

gas, physically. But there's nothing he can do about Villopoto who pulls away to win his series-leading fifth Main Event of the season and extend his points lead to 26.

On the last lap Dungey makes a final run at Reed but Reed won't have it and he blocks Dungey's lines to hold him off for a podium finish. Dungey is fourth, then comes Justin Brayton and Canard who catches up to sixth.

In the Lites class veteran Ryan Sipes gets a decent start and begins working forward, eventually passing leader Baggett when Baggett lands off the track over the finishline jump and goes over the bars. From there Sipes pulls away to a convincing victory. It's his first ever. Barcia is second yet again while Baggett recovers for third and Wilson grabs sixth after yet another crash-filled Main Event.

JACKSONVILLE

Perhaps the nuttiest race in the history of supercross – especially when you combine the events of both classes on the night – is also the least-attended one on the circuit. For some reason, despite the great weather, the Jacksonville SX never has that many fans in attendance.

With the inclusion of a right-hand first turn – where the racers can't get to their rear brakes – after a short start straight that leads directly into a tricky rhythm section, things are bound to get nuts.

In the first Lites heat, Daytona winner Blake

Baggett – who is second in points – goes down with Justin Barcia during the race and fails to make the Main. Then in the first 450 heat race Justin Brayton is knocked down in the first turn and fails to qualify for the Main Event and in the second heat Villopoto goes down in the rhythm section after the start with Matt Boni and drops out of the heat. The heat is won, easily, by Stewart.

In the Lites LCQ Baggett goes down in the first turn and fails to make the Main. In the 450cc LCQ Villopoto and Brayton go down together in the first turn and fail to make the Main Event.

With Villopoto holding a 26-point lead and Stewart seemingly destined to take 25 points with his upcoming victory in his hometown race things are looking bleak for Villopoto – until, off of the start of the Main Event, just a couple of jumps into the rhythm section Stewart tangles with Florida's Matt Goerke and goes down. Unlike Daytona, this time Stewart can't get up. He's carted off the track and is credited with 18th place and three points meaning he is still trailing Villopoto by 23 points.

With Villopoto out Trey Canard finally puts it together and begins to pull away. Late in the race Reed actually passes him for the lead for a moment but Canard holds him off to win his second Main Event of the season. Reed is second and Dungey is third and while Stewart is still 23 points back, Chad Reed is now only seven behind Villopoto as the series heads to Canada.

Justin Barcia's looking good for the Lites East crown



Defending champ Ryan Dungey gets on the gas after series leader Chad Reed



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Veteran Ryan Sipes sits third in the Lites East points – despite getting punted off the track in Toronto

SERIES STANDINGS

SUPERCROSS

LITES EAST

1	Chad Reed	236	1	Justin Barcia	138
2	Ryan Villopoto	233	2	Dean Wilson	122
3	Ryan Dungey	228	3	Ryan Sipes	115
4	James Stewart	216	4	Blake Baggett	100
5	Trey Canard	214	5	Blake Wharton	89
6	Andrew Short	159	6	PJ Larsen	80
7	Justin Brayton	137	7	Matt Lemoine	80
8	Kevin Windham	134	8	Malcolm Stewart	55
9	Davi Millsaps	128	9	Lance Vincent	49
10	Nicholas Wey	109	10	Alex Martin	47



Andrew Short holds a solid sixth on the 350 KTM

In the Lites Main Justin Barcia gets a great start and flat-out smokes the rest of the class, making it look easy on his way to his second win of the season. Dean Wilson finally puts things back together for second and Sipes hangs on for third. Sipes moves into second in the points standings with Baggett's Main Event absence.

TORONTO

As if things couldn't get worse for Villopoto or Stewart, they head to Toronto and the downward spiral continues. Stewart puts in probably the most dominant heat race performance of the season, winning the eight-lap race by 20 seconds, while Reed and Villopoto have falls but finish second and third anyway. In the other heat Dungey leads it until the beginning of the final lap when Canard sneaks by in a masterful move on the inside of the turn before the finishline jump. Canard wins the heat over Dungey.

The first turn is a left-hand sweeper into a 180 right-hand turn so whoever is on the outside in the first part ends up on the inside of the next. Stewart looks to have the Main Event holeshot but then falls on the inside of the 180 all on his own. Villopoto is also momentarily hung up in a separate deal.

Frenchman Fabien Izoird, who is filling in on Jake Weimer's Monster Energy Kawasaki KX450F, leads the first time across the finishline but shortly after Dungey finds his way by, followed quickly by Reed and Canard who take over second and third. On the third lap Stewart catches Villopoto for eighth place but then tries an aggressive inside move and they both go down. Stewart is up relatively quickly – losing only three spots – but Villopoto has to pull

into the mechanics' area to fix his front brake lever which is bent so far it's causing the throttle to stick.

Canard pressures Reed for a little while but then begins making mistakes and Reed begins gaining on Dungey. With three laps to go Reed is close enough to Dungey to strike but then immediately makes a couple of mistakes, giving Dungey enough room to go on to his first win of the season. Reed is second and Canard third and by the finish Stewart finds his way up to a very distant fourth place. Then come Brayton and Nick Wey in his best race of the year. Wey is the last racer on the lead lap in sixth.

With a handful of races remaining, Reed takes over the championship lead on his privateer Honda by three points over Villopoto who ends up ninth in the race. All of a sudden Dungey is only eight points back of Reed for the championship lead with Stewart a further 12 behind, two in front of Canard. From first to fifth they are separated by 22 points.

In the Lites class Dean Wilson starts outside the top five but begins gaining on leader Barcia right away and at the halfway point he catches and passes him for the lead, running away to the victory. Barcia is second over team-mate Blake Wharton in third. Barcia has yet to finish outside of the top two and Wilson moves into second in points, albeit 16 points behind.

Early in the race, though, Sipes makes a pass on Barcia and Wharton for the lead in the same turn, only for Wharton to come into the next turn and clean him out, knocking him clear off the track. Sipes gets up nearly a lap down but somehow still makes his way back up to fifth place in what is easily the best ride of the weekend. Sipes sits third in points with three rounds left.



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It's been a tough few weeks
for James Stewart



EYE OF THE TIGER!

JUST LIKE ANOTHER HIGH-PROFILE AFRICAN AMERICAN SPORTSMAN, JAMES STEWART REFUSES TO BOW DOWN TO THOSE 'FANS' WHO ARE NEVER GOING TO LIKE HIM...

Words and photo by STEVE COX

The subject of the Stateside feature story in this month's Dirt Bike Rider, James Stewart has been arrested in Florida for 'impersonating a police officer'. As details have begun to trickle in, it seems that he and a buddy pulled out lights to pull over a car or something like that. Then instead of getting behind that car they pulled alongside it, at which point the driver of the car flashed his badge indicating he was a cop and Stewart freaked out and fled the scene. He and his friend were arrested at the airport in Orlando, Florida.

Stewart and I have had more than our fair share of differences over the years. He can be aloof with the media and he can flat-out be a pain in the butt to talk to when he's not in a good mood. Usually, once you can get to him, he's a really good interview and he has insightful stuff to say but getting there can be a bit of a pain. I actually had to fly in to Florida two days early in order to get the interview with Stewart that culminated in the story you see in this issue. But, in the end, he delivered.

Having said all of that, this whole 'impersonating a police officer' thing is such nonsense it's hard to wrap my head around it. It was obviously a joke. He was driving a super-high Toyota Tundra pick-up.

It looked like a monster truck. I think the only reason the cops pulled over was because they were cops and wanted to bust this guy for messing around with a police light he bought at the local swap meet. There's no way any sane person would believe it was the police behind them in a giant Toyota Tundra.

While what he did was incredibly stupid and reckless it wasn't malicious. To treat him like a hard-core criminal for putting a light on his dash is ridiculous. But, alas, this is life in America – the land of the free to do as the government says you should do. I do find it interesting that I left out a quote in his story because it didn't seem to fit and it fits now so I'm going to include it here.

He was talking about how some people just don't like him and they're never going to. He's not going to win them over. And then he talked about Tiger Woods and the stuff he has gone through in his personal life but how Woods has worked to better himself as a result.

"I think I'm a person that every time I line up on the gate something is going to happen," Stewart said prior to the Jacksonville round. "I'm going to try to win. And I'm proud of myself for being that. And I think people have judgments about me but I think it's a good thing when people talk negative about you. It

means you're doing something pretty good. There's always somebody who can probably find something wrong with the three laps I rode at Daytona or what I did here or the way I walk or dress. And then that's just life.

"You know, I look at Tiger Woods and even after that whole thing that went on with him I think I respect him more because for a guy to be beat down and humiliated in public, to lose his family and still come out and say 'you know what? I'm sucking right now. I'm not that good but I want to be the best still'. I look at that as, like, that's what I'm doing, you know? For sure, I definitely could ride better but I'm in second, 26 points behind. I had people saying that I was quitting and all this stuff, you know, trying to humiliate me.

"But I'm still here and I'm still going to try to win this championship and I'm still going to come back and do it. And so, for me that's what I look up to, just to be able to sit here and take all the blows and say 'you know what? I'm not going anywhere. You guys can give up on that. It doesn't bother me'."

We'll see if he can live up to that now.



AMERICAN IDIOT

RIPPER!

AT JUST 17 YEARS OLD, BEN BURRELL DECIDED TO FLY ALL THE WAY FROM HIS NATIVE AUSTRALIA TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF IN THE UK – AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE'S DONE...

Words by Robert Lynn Photo by Jonty Edmunds

The Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Enduro Championship has attracted a lot of new faces and riders into its paddock for 2011 and the furthest travelled is Aussie teenager Ben Burrell. Riding with the Fast Eddy Racing team under the watchful eye of Paul Edmondson, Burrell quickly established himself as a top contender by dominating the U19 class at the opening rounds of the series. After backing that up with another outstanding performance at rounds three and four, he now turns his attention to the Enduro World Championship...

DBR: Tell us a little about your background Ben?

BB: "I'm 17 years old and I'm from New South Wales, Australia. I've been riding motorcycles since I was three years of age. I started riding bikes around the home farm and then progressed into competition. Firstly, I started riding trials before turning to enduro when I was 12 years old, mainly racing hare and hounds and sprint races."

DBR: How did you then find your way over to Britain for the 2011 season?

BB: "I originally arrived in the UK to compete in the Paul Eddy Extreme Race. I saw it advertised on Enduro News and it seemed to carry a lot of hype. I've always wanted to try my hand at extreme races like The Tough One or Erzberg so this seemed like a good opportunity to get something started. I got in contact with Paul about entering the race and he helped organise a bike for me to ride. The race was awesome so after it I decided to stay on longer."

DBR: How long do you plan on staying in Europe?

BB: "At the moment I've just been taking things week by week. Paul has been really good and has left it up to me how long I want to stay. Right now we are preparing to head to the first two rounds of the Enduro World Championship in Spain and Portugal. Afterwards I will most likely return home but I do hope to return again before the year is out."

DBR: How do you feel about contesting the EWC?

BB: "It's something I'm really excited about and racing the EWC has been one of main goals to achieve while I'm here. With the Fast Eddy team competing in the opening rounds it seemed like the perfect opportunity to stay on longer and race them too! I am riding in the U19 Youth Cup on a KTM 125EXC and I'm looking forward to the experience. Hopefully I can put in a good showing on the world stage!"

DBR: How has your time been as part of the Fast Eddy Racing team?

BB: "The experience has been unbelievable and I'm so glad I've come over. Just to go out practising with Paul has been amazing, you learn so much just watching the things he can do on a bike. Also with my team-mates Tom Sagar and Lee Edmondson, I have been able to learn a lot from them. Just being able to ask them questions and try things differently has been a great learning experience. Derrick, Paul's brother, has really helped me out too, especially with bike set-up and preparation. It's been a really fast team to have been part of – they've got a lot of titles between them."

DBR: The opening round of the BSEC saw the wettest conditions for quite some time yet you dominated your class winning the opening day by over three minutes and then almost doing the same again the following day. It surprised a lot of people to see how competitive you were – did it surprise you?

BB: "[Laughs] Yes, I was surprised for sure. To get a result like that in those conditions was unbelievable to be honest. Things just seemed to click there and everything went perfectly for me. People probably thought that maybe we don't see conditions like that in Australia which is true to an extent but we do get periods where it rains a lot. So I have raced that stuff before and had an idea of what to expect. I think some other riders had their own problems there too whereas I had a good clean weekend racing with no dramas."

DBR: How did you enjoy rounds three and four – a completely different type of course with fast flowing fields linked by tricky, technical woodland and rocky stream crossings?

BB: "It was a good challenge and a lot of fun. The field sections were really fast which makes it hard to find time but in the woodland you could really push on and find some extra seconds here and there. Even though it was such a long lap there was nowhere to relax and the times in my class were really tight so it was a real dogfight all weekend."

DBR: In round three you had to push hard to recover from some early mistakes to eventually grab the U19 win. Talk us through how the day went for you...

BB: "I definitely set myself up with a lot of work to do by crashing in the first three special tests. The course was a little slippery on the grass sections and it managed to catch me out. That was probably just down to inexperience, pushing too hard on slick grass in the wrong places. I made some changes to the bike set-up and began to settle in and gradually began to claw my way back up to grab a win."

"On day two I was a little slow to get going and lost some time that was hard to make back up. I had some issues with the bike stalling on the final lap that cost me

more time but I managed to finish second which I was more than pleased about."

DBR: Has the standard of riders here surprised you?

BB: "No, I knew how fast these guys were going to be. With the internet it's really easy to follow what happens overseas. When riders can put in times that are only a few seconds off what David Knight is doing then you know what to expect. He's a world champion so for riders to be able to challenge him shows then that the standard of riding is very high in Britain."

DBR: This is only the second season of running the sprint racing format in Britain. For a rider that has grown up with sprint racing how does the standard of the Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Championship compare to that of the Australian series?

BB: "The standard of presentation and promoting is higher than Australia. There seems to be a lot more spectators watching here too. In Australia we normally don't see such big crowds attending the events because it is such a big country and everything is more spread out which makes it harder for people to attend."

"As far as tracks and time scoring are concerned both series run pretty much the same. Our tracks are shorter – on average between five and 10 minutes – which I think is a little better. That would be the only thing I can see this championship needing to improve on – reducing the length of the lap – but I understand in some situations that isn't always possible."

DBR: You mentioned that you plan to return to Australia after the opening rounds of the EWC. When you return home have you got a team to ride for?

BB: "At the moment I haven't officially signed with anyone. Last season I rode for Ballard's Yamaha and when I mentioned to them that I wanted to come over to Europe they really encouraged me to do so. They helped organise a lot of things for me to come over and said they would be ready to help me out again once I returned. I can't thank them enough for the help they've given me – it would have been really difficult to come over here otherwise."

DBR: Finally, how have you enjoyed your time here in Britain?

BB: "This experience has been awesome! It's been brilliant to come over here and see how things work on this side of the world. To live, train and race with a rider like Paul Edmondson has been a fantastic experience and I've learnt so much from doing so. I can't wait now to get to the EWC and try to show what I can do. Coming here has opened a lot of doors for me and I've made a lot of friends. I've loved every minute of it!"



Ben Burrell's slotted straight into life in the UK



POKER FACED!

THE TOP MEN ARE KEEPING THEIR CARDS CLOSE TO THEIR CHESTS
AS SEARLE AND DESALLE COME OUT TOP AT HAWKSTONE...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Sutty

They're curious things pre-season internationals. In terms of getting riders and bikes ready for more important things like world and domestic title fights they're pretty priceless shakedowns. On the other hand, no-one wants to hang it out and get hurt in a so-called 'lemonade race'. But then again, do you know any top-flight racer who likes to get beaten?

So winners and losers all tend to play down their performances and you can bet there are a few dirt-splattered poker faces around the paddock after the Hawkstone International MX.

Tommy Searle's certainly playing it cool. Over a second-and-a-half faster than Zach Osborne in qualifying, the Monster CLS Pro Circuit Kawasaki rider is streaking away at the front of the pack when the opening MX2 race is red-flagged at just over half-distance so medics can load PAR Homes Honda's Luke Hawkins into a waiting ambulance.

>>





Marty Barr (#50) nails a mega holeshot on the Proppa.com 350 ahead of the 450s of Clement Desalle (#25) and Tanel Leok (#6)

A dynamic, low-angle shot of a motocross rider's lower body in motion. The rider is wearing a white and black motocross suit with 'ROCK OIL' and 'FOX' branding, and a white boot with a black Fox racing logo. The background is a blurred dirt track, suggesting high speed.

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Race two is initially led by Zach's Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha team-mate Arnaud Tonus but Searle is swiftly past and, ahem, puts on a clinic at the front. Osborne slugs his way through to second four laps in but can't close down Searle and it's the Brit – fresh back from a couple of seasons Stateside – who wins by over 15 seconds.

"It was a good day," reckons Tommy. "I didn't push hard – all my riding's coming pretty easy to me right now. I worked hard in the winter. Hopefully I can keep my momentum up and bring it into the first GP because that's more important. The main thing is we learn from today – it's a new bike and a new team for me and we need to work together to make more improvements to the bike."

There are certainly lessons the team need to learn. Even if Tommy wasn't pushing hard it was two hard for two engines with one going in practice and a second one nipping up as he leads the Route 77-backed Super Final. If we were to come up with a reason for the seizures it would be pure speculation – so let's speculate that to reduce engine drag and put the Kawasaki on a par with the factory KTM's Tommy's team are experimenting with oil levels. But don't quote me on that – like I said, pure speculation.

So the French team may need to take another look at their motors but their star rider is super-fast. Possibly his main threat to a world crown in action at Hawkstone is Osborne and he gives him a pretty thorough seeing to. But is it an important psychological victory for Tommy?

"Not really," says Searle, "it's how Zach takes it. I knew I was riding well and I think I showed a lot of people today that I haven't been slacking. I was a little bit unlucky in America but my speed's always been there and I think now people realise that."

A 2-3 card is good enough for Tonus to take second on the day and the relaxed Swiss rider is, erm, pretty relaxed about the whole thing despite suffering from armpump. As you'd expect from a pre-season international, he chalks it up to simply being a matter of preparation for greater things to come.

"It's been a good day but I had armpump really bad. At the beginning of the race I had good speed but then I got armpump and lost some speed. It's been difficult to finish a race – the track was really rough so it was good training. I'm still on the podium. The bike is coming really good and I think we're going to be ready for the first GP."

Already on the podium for third overall in >>



Swordy's off-song and pulls out of race two feeling sick

FACED!



A fighting fourth first time out is the high point of the day for Brad



This is the view the MX2 field get of Tommy Searle

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As far as final shakedowns go it's not the best of days for a couple of favoured riders for the British MX1 crown with 2009 champ Brad Anderson finishing in fifth on the PAR Homes Honda and Buildbase CCM's Stephen Sword back in 12th. Both riders then opt to sit out the Super Final.

"I'm a bit disappointed," admits Brad. "The first race was good and I come fourth and I felt as though I had the speed in the second one but made a silly mistake that highsided us and I come off big. I got back up but couldn't find my rhythm for a while until Simpson come past us and then I got back on it and felt really comfortable and then come off again."

"A lot of people today have come here for a practice and not injure themselves. We've done a bit of testing on the bike and changed some stuff – we should be spot on soon."

Swordy scores with just a race one ninth and is feeling ill so he pulls out of the second moto. When we catch up with him in the paddock it's obvious he's upset to have missed out on a chance to show his class against world championship riders.

"I'm feeling good on the bike but I've just been sick," he says. "I wanted to get good starts – I feel I've got a point to prove against the GP riders but if you're not starting with them then you're not going to catch them. I need to be there with them to see their lines. But this was just a practice race."



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MX2 thanks to a 3-4 card, it's Max Anstie who's in a great position to benefit when his team-mate Tommy DNFs the Super Final. Making the most of a holeshot and a five-second advantage over the MX1 men, it's Max who sets the initial pace and leads until just before half-distance when Tommy goes through as the pair leap side-by-side into the Hawkstone whoops/rhythm section at the far end of the track.

And when Tommy comes to an abrupt halt Max keeps it pinned to the flag to finish almost 11 seconds ahead of an MX1 freight train headed by Rockstar Energy Suzuki's former world champ Steve Ramon, LS Honda's Shaun Simpson, Ramon's team-mate Clement Desalle and factory TM man Tanel Leok.

If you ever have to bet on the happiest man in the paddock then the super-pumped Max is usually worth a few quid on the nose and, true to form, the California-based Brit – back in Europe for a season of GPs – is all smiles after what is, amazingly, his Hawkstone debut.

"I've had a really good first time ride at Hawkstone. It's been my first time racing in England for a long time and I had a lot of fun. It's great to be here. I'm 17 years old and my dad used to race here when he was 18 so it feels pretty special."

"I'm working, I'm learning. My dad's not here at the moment – he's over in America with my new little baby brother who's just been born – but he's over in another two weeks and then we'll start building and building for the GPs. The speed was fine but I was a little unlucky in the second race when my bike started making a strange noise. But that's what these races are

for – to get ready for the GPs."

Clear favourite in MX1 going into Hawkstone, Rockstar Energy Suzuki's world vice-champ Desalle doesn't disappoint and chases down Leok first time out, passing the Estonian up the famous hill. The MX Panda then nails a gate-to-flag win second time out and despite a slip in the Super Final restricting him to fourth it's a job well done.

Leok's pair of seconds give him second on the day ahead of Ramon with two thirds as Simpson upholds British honour in fourth overall with a 5-4 card and third in the Super Final.

"I got a decent start in the first one and made it hard for myself," admits Woody. "In the second one I never really found a good rhythm. I didn't like the track at all today. It's really hard and no good lines are forming."

"It's been a mixed day but overall I am happy enough with my speed and fitness at this point in the season. In previous years I have been too fast too early so I am concentrating on building things up week by week. We have still got things to work on but I think we can be strong and ready by the time we go to the first GP early next month."



MX2 launch up the legendary Hawkstone start straight

Double world champ Steve Ramon
usually goes well at Hawkstone and
he's on the podium again this year



RESULTS

MX1

1	Clement Desalle	Rockstar Suzuki	40
2	Tanel Leok	Bonver TM	34
3	Steve Ramon	Rockstar Suzuki	30
4	Shaun Simpson	LS Honda	24
5	Brad Anderson	PAR Homes Honda	21
6	Anthony Boissiere	Monster Energy Yamaha	19
7	Sebastien Pourcel	KRT Kawasaki	17
8	Graeme Irwin	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	16
9	Markus Shiffer	Suzuki	13
10	Martin Barr	Proppa.com KTM	11

MX2

1	Tommy Searle	Monster CLS Pro Circuit Kawasaki	40
2	Arnaud Tonus	Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha	32
3	Max Anstie	Monster CLS Pro Circuit Kawasaki	28
4	Zach Osborne	Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha	27
5	Valentin Teillet	Suzuki	22
6	Elliott Banks-Browne	DB Racing Honda	22
7	Scott Elderfield	Lanes Kawasaki	17
8	Jordan Booker	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	15
9	Mattis Karro	Route 77 MVR-D Honda	13
10	Lewis Toombs	Route 77 MVR-D Honda	11

SUPER FINAL

1 Anstie, 2 Ramon, 3 Simpson, 4 Desalle, 5 Leok, 6 Karro, 7 Boissiere, 8 Teillet, 9 Tonus, 10 Osborne

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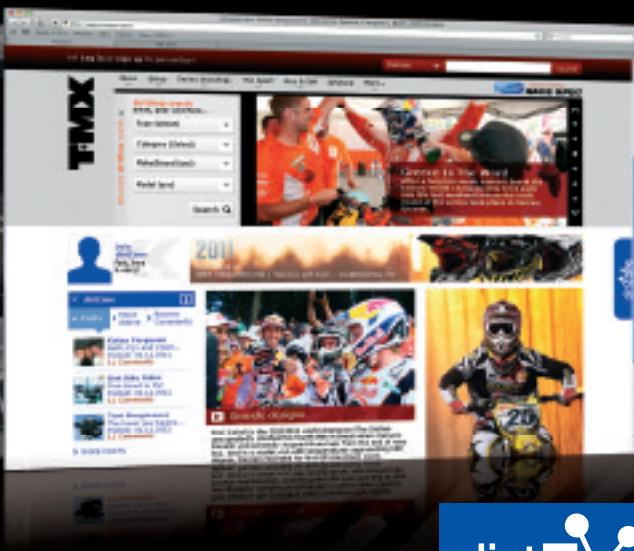
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TC and Graeme Irwin bang bars out of the gate

TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED!

ON PAPER IT ALL LOOKED SO SIMPLE AT THE START OF THE SEASON BUT TWO ROUNDS IN AND THE MAXXIS BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP KEEPS THROWING UP SURPRISES...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Sutty and Sophie Whiting

It's only the end of March and already we're two rounds down in the 2011 Maxxis British Motocross Championship. So what do we know?

Well, firstly – on a purely personal level – I know that the opening round at Little Silver is a bloody long way for a day trip. And I also know that Canada Heights takes even longer to get home from – especially with next to nothing left on the DBR Wauxhall Wiwaro's brake pads. But enough about me...

What we're all interested in is what's happening on track and what's happening on track is that Steve Dixon's Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha team are running away with MX2 while Steve's MX1 pilot Jason Dougan is the virtual leader of the big-bike class. So all-in-all a pretty good start to the season for Steve and the gang...

"Everybody works hard – every team in the GPs works hard – and we're up against a lot of factory riders so we have to put the work in," admits Steve. "The riders have put a lot of work in and I think it's paying off although we haven't been to the grands prix yet."

And it's got to be said it's hardly surprising that defending champ Zach Osborne and Steve's newbie Arnaud Tonus are setting the pace – especially after 2010 runner-up Jake Nicholls breaks his leg in between rounds one and two. But what is surprising is that it's the Swiss newcomer who's out in front.

At Little Silver it's Zach who goes into the third and final moto with two wins to Arnaud's pair of seconds but when the hirsute American rev-monster's bike breaks he finds himself back in fourth, 19 points behind race winner Arnaud with Route 77 MVR-D Honda's Mattis Karro taking second on the day ahead of The Reverend and his HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK machine.

Fast forward three weeks to Canada Heights and this time Tonus beats Osborne fair and square. After nailing the holeshot from the inside

gate in the opening race, Zach's actually caught and passed by Arnaud. He sticks with him but can't pass him back. A stinker of a start second time out sees Zach forced to fight his way through to second and in the final race of the day he crosses the line first after passing his team-mate. But his 2-2-1 card is beaten by Tonus' 1-1-2 card and he drops another three points.

So that's something we definitely know – there are no team orders in the BICWWY camp. And Steve's happy to confirm this.

"There are certainly no team orders, it's too early in the season. And they've got a bit of respect for each other on the track – at the moment! If this had been last year and Zach was on his own I think he would have won by just enough. With Arnaud here it's pushing him. And there's no team #1, they're both equal in that respect and they get exactly the same parts. They set their bike up slightly different suspension wise but the engines are pretty much the same. All the mechanics share information. We want to give them both the best we can."

"A lot of people have noticed Arnaud – he's got a really nice style, a really smooth style. I liken him to Jenson Button and Zach to Lewis Hamilton. Just the wear on the bike is totally different. I mean Zach is so hard on the bike and Arnaud is so easy."

Another thing we know as far as MX2 is concerned is that Mark Chamberlain's Latvian rider Mattis Karro and DB Racing Honda's Elliott Banks-Browne are going to have to raise their game to stay with the top two although the pair are pretty closely tied together in third and fourth and putting on some great racing so it's hardly a complaint, more an observation.

Let's move up to MX1 now where, to be fair, we know a little bit less. In fact, the only thing we know for sure is that it's all gone a tad Tales of the Unexpected. I mean, who would have thought that at Little Silver pre-season favourite Stephen Sword would not once but >>



Two rounds in and
Brad Anderson can almost
taste the series lead



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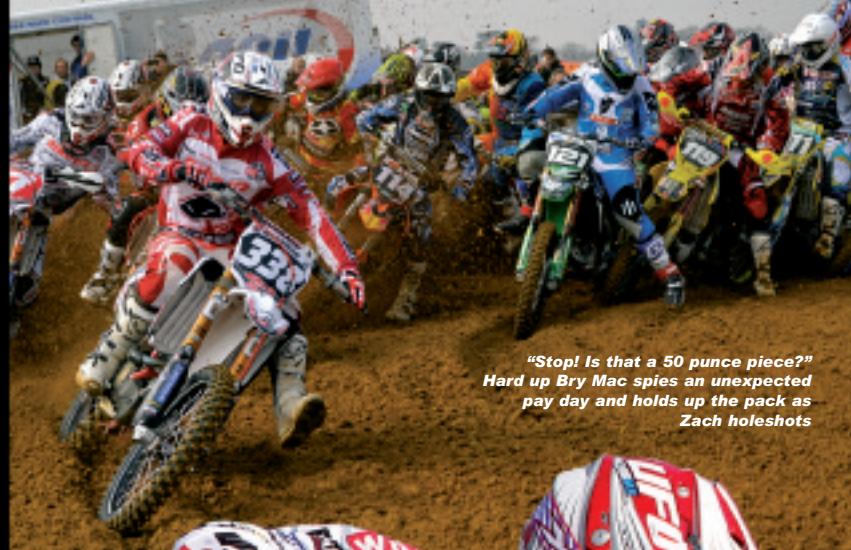
SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

1	Shaun Simpson	LS Honda	138
2	Jason Dougan	Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha	112
3	Brad Anderson	PAR Homes Honda	106
4	Kristian Whatley	Samsung Yamaha	102
5	Tom Church	Buildbase CCM	98
6	Stephen Sword	Buildbase CCM	80
7	Martin Barr	Propa.com KTM	76
8	Gert Krestinov	Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	75
9	Graeme Irwin	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	75
10	Dorren Coutts	Yamaha	57

MX2

1	Arnaud Tonus	Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha	141
2	Zach Osborne	Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha	119
3	Mattis Karro	Route 77 MVR-D Honda	109
4	Elliott Banks-Browne	DB Racing Honda	101
5	Mel Pocock	Relentless Suzuki by TAS	84
6	Scott Elderfield	Lanes Kawasaki	63
7	Bryan MacKenzie	Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	60
8	Ray Rowson	Samsung Yamaha	58
9	Jake Nicholls	HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK	56
10	Stuart Edmonds	Electraction TM	56



"Stop! Is that a 50 pence piece?"
Hard up Bry Mac spies an unexpected
pay day and holds up the pack as
Zach holeshots



Defending champ
Zach Osborne's got a fight
on his hands dealing with
team-mate Arnaud Tonus

twice lose a rear tyre. Victory in the final race salvages 25 points for Swordy but his slippery rim costs him a more or less guaranteed maximum haul and there's a big, big difference between leading the championship and leaving the opening round back in 13th.

With Swordy struggling it's wildcard Shaun Simpson on the LS Honda who wins at Little Silver with a 2-2-2 card from Swordy's Buildbase CCM team-mate Tom Church and Doogs who both claim a win apiece. Brad Anderson's right up there in fourth on the PAR Honda and the great gamble – that's Kristian Whatley riding for Roy Emberson's Samsung Yamaha team – looks to be paying dividends with Jem's equally enigmatic son in fifth.

At Canada Heights it's another overall verdict in favour of Woody although this time the Scot manages to win the opening and closing motos to go with his race two second. And he's ever so slightly peeved that he doesn't get credited with

the win in race two.

The second moto features more red flags than an old-school Kremlin rally. First French wildcard Seb Pourcel hits the eject button just before half-distance causing the race to be stopped, then the restarted moto ends prematurely when Gordon Crockard rings his bell. This time the result stands and having "burst a bit of a bollock" to get to the front after a bad start Woody's disappointed that the result's wound back to when Doogs was leading.

Also disappointed is Swordy who holeshots the second moto from the restart and looks to be clearing off before taking an unscheduled soil sample that dumps him back down the field. A brace of second-placed finishes behind Simpson ensure he still gets onto the podium in third behind the super-consistent – and super-fast – Whatley who looks to be firmly settled in the Embo camp.

Doogs is fourth overall but another consistent

day means he moves up to second in the standings and with Woody now moving on to contest the Belgian championship he is in effect leading the MX1 title chase.

"Jason's decided it's time to stop messing around and he's getting paid to do a job now," reckons team boss Dixon. "He's been away in America for a long time with Zach and seen how serious Zach is and now I think the results are showing."

Despite only managing fifth in Kent, Ando moves up to third in the championship just six points adrift of Doogs with Whatley fourth a further four points behind. TC's under the weather at Canada Heights and drops to fifth with Swordy sixth.

The championship now moves on to Lyng on April 17 for round three when you can expect the unexpected in MX1 and only the very brave will dare call which Yamaha will be leading MX2...

bsec

Greg Evans keeps Knight
honest all weekend



BSEC

SERIES STANDINGS

1	David Knight	KTM	77	
2	Greg Evans	KTM	64	
3	Tom Sagar	KTM	63	
4	Daryl Bolter	KTM	50	
5	Si Wakely	Husaberg	49	
6	Paul Edmondson	KTM	39	
7	Matt Ridgeway	Yamaha	23	
8	Ollie Moyce	Kawasaki	23	
9	Jon Hinam	Husaberg	23	
10	Jamie Lewis	KTM	22	

ORANGE CRUSH!

KNIGHTER AND SPECIAL GREG DOMINATE ROUNDS THREE AND FOUR OF THE BSEC

Words by Jonty Edmunds Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

No-one will believe me when I tell them I spent two days at an enduro race in the UK and it didn't rain," jokes French journalist Richard Angot who's on our side of the channel to find out first hand what the Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Enduro Championship is all about. Slumping into a chair outside the MPS Racing Husqvarna team's Moto GP-sized truck he adds "I'm exhausted, no-one can say sprint enduro racing is easy".

Enjoying two days of glorious spring weather, the third and fourth rounds of the 2011 BSEC series come and go in stark contrast to the mud and rut-infested opener in Wales just five weeks earlier. With a totally different track laid on, perfect dirt matched to a fast and flowing course puts a weekend-long smile on just about every rider's face.

With a week's training in Florida and a whistle-stop two-day engine test in Italy keeping him busy before the event, David Knight arrives fired up and ready to make sure he doesn't get beaten like he did at round two of the championship. Riding an EWC-spec version of his booming 500cc KTM, DK soon shows he means business by topping the first test of the weekend.

"It was just one of those things not winning the second round," explains Knighter. "I had a few problems, Tom was riding well and the day was cut short because of the weather. It's no big deal. I've got the bike a lot better sorted now and feel good so we'll see what happens this weekend."

What happens is that Knight completes a perfect weekend and ends the two-day event undefeated with seven test wins at round three and six at round four. Close to two minutes ahead of Welshman Greg Evans at round three, Knight comfortably tops round four to stretch his lead at the top of the series.

Evans is the rider who steps up to challenge Knight the closest on his 350cc KTM. Just six seconds behind Knight on lap one at round three, despite his best efforts Greg's unable to get any closer as the reigning Enduro 3 world champ ups his pace. Come the end of the day David's pulling close to 20 seconds a test but Evans holds firm in the runner-up spot. At round four Evans secures another second place result.

With DK and Special Greg locking out the top two spots over the two days, Husaberg's Si Wakely and

KTM-mounted Tom Sagar earn one third place result each with Wakely first to shine. Continuing his run of good form, he not only places as the highest finishing two-stroke rider but also grabs his best result of the series so far. On day two he places fifth with one wayward special test preventing him from finishing higher.

From winner at round two Tom Sagar places a surprising fifth at round three as he sees Daryl Bolter finish between himself and Wakely in third. Disappointed at having not placed higher, Tom gets his act together at round four and despite a slightly off the pace opening test improves to third.

Struggling to find a bike set-up that he's happy with, Paul Edmondson finds himself close to four minutes behind winner Knight and unable to really do anything about the other riders ahead of him. With a wayward time on the fourth timed lap Eddy knows he's going to have a tough job cracking the top five and takes sixth which he repeats at round four.

While Eddy doesn't have the greatest of opening days Aaron Poolman secures his best Elite class performance with seventh. Struggling in the mud and ruts at the opening rounds, the fast, flowing field at round three added to the old-school motocross track prove to be right up his street. But round four's a different story altogether as Aaron crashes hard on lap three and heads home.

Another rider mixing it with the better-known Elite competitors is Matt Ridgeway who's eighth at rounds three and four. Matt, who was sidelined for much of 2010 following a horror pre-season crash, delivers fast and consistent times throughout the weekend. At round three he finishes ahead of Kawasaki rider Ollie Moyce and Husaberg's Jon Hinam while at round four he gets the better of Moyce and KTM-mounted Lee Edmondson.

Manx youngster Danny McCannen on his Gas Gas dominates the Under 23 class at both rounds, finishing ahead of Australian TM rider Josh Green who makes his UK debut following 12 months of visa issues. Jonny Walker shows that he doesn't only deliver results at extreme enduro events with third at round three while Alex Rockwell claims the final podium spot at round four after a costly error spoils his hopes of a top three result at round three.

Top honours are split in the Under 19 class where Aussie ace Ben Burrell wins at round three before Jamie McCannen – that's Danny's younger brother – tops round four with some stunning riding.



DK is unbeatable at rounds three and four of the BSEC

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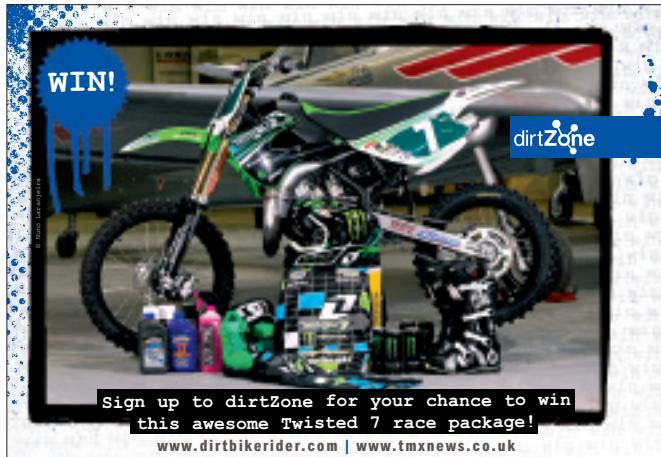
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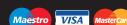
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Kye Williams and Ty Kellett



James Rowe, Liam Gale and Ben White



Go on my son!



Tyrone Cleaver leads



Ty Kellett



MCF General Manager Roy Barton mucks in

BRILL AT BROOKY!

SOUTH SOMERSET MX

WEBSITE: WWW.SOUTHSOMERSETMX.COM CHAIR: MIKE SMITH BOOKING IN: WENDY 07769 215933

Following a winter break and with the 2011 season now back in full swing, Rage is ready to take another bite of our club sandwich and the first stopping off point this year is Brookethorpe in Gloucestershire for a little look at the South Somerset MX club that's now running under the MCF banner.

South Somerset joined the MCF in 2009 and was one of the pioneer clubs inking a deal to compete in the fledgling MCF League. Last year they creditably ended up as the Elite Youth League and Grand Slam winners and the event at Brooky in March was a second round qualifier for this year's competition.

When I arrived at the circuit the meet and greet team in the shape of Claire Williams and Sharon Harris pointed me in the right direction to hook up with chairman Mike Smith – they also asked me to keep an eye out for their own offspring racing in the 65s and the Rookie class.

The two riders in question were Kye Williams (Rookies) and Joshua Harris. In Joshua's case keeping an eye out paid nice dividends as he has developed a super-entertaining style and it was only his second ever meeting – good on yer little fella!

Following a brief chat with MCF General Manager Roy Barton, primarily about the Mylaps

timing system now being used by SS, it was time to sign on and take a look at the action. With transponders now more viable under a number of MCF options the resulting process was bang on with everyone eagerly looking for their all-important lap times, instantly available on lovely pristine printed sheets. Wouldn't it be great to see all club meetings run this way?

Out on the course in the Auto section James Rowe dominated the eight-strong field, taking all three heat wins quite clearly. Liam Gale carded three second place finishes while Ben White proved to be equally consistent as he nailed down third overall. In the 65s there were 14 keen as mustard on the startline but up at the sharp end Ryan Tanner had the situation well under control as he brilliantly cleaned up in an ultra-tight scrap with Jaydon Murphy. As the flag came down in all three heats there was never more than two seconds between the pair. Third overall was Connor Ford.

In the Smallies section the startline numbers were pretty similar but one guy stood out – Billy King. Kingy won the opening two motos by a clear margin but had to settle for third place in his final outing as Aaron Gordon took the winner's spoils. The battle for second overall went all the way to the final moto with Aaron's win proving absolutely decisive as he nudged out

Callum Ford and Bradley Flagg.

Curtis Blamey posted the fastest time in BW practice and looked well set for the opening heat win – that was until the Honda four-banger hit trouble which concluded the day's racing for Blamey. Todd Kellett on the Twisted 7 Kwacker picked up the B/W gauntlet and ran with it in spectacular fashion, demolishing the 23-strong field with a maximum points haul. Tyrone Cleaver lead the Biggies chase, picking up a well-fought second overall going 2-2-2 with Gareth Artus nailing third just one point ahead of Luke Williams.

Mirroring the national trend the Rookie section was the best-supported youth division with 25 settling in for a good day's racing. Tommy Alba always looked favourite to win but he made hard work of the opening race, hitting terra firma on a couple of occasions before eventually claiming second place behind Zac Alsop. After that Alba took the section by the scruff of the neck to win comprehensively going 2-1-1 as in a reversal of fortune Alsop finished as runner up going 1-2-2.

Ross Churchill and Jordan Carrier shared out all the third place results taking overall positions three and four respectively and in fifth overall it was really good to see Ty Kellett back in action on the T7 Kawasaki.



FACTFILE

LIAM KNIGHT

DoB: 16-9-96

Hometown: Liphook

Sponsors: Maverik Racing, Drain Away, Race FX, Rip N' Roll...

Fave pro rider: Stefan Everts

Fave food and drink: Sunday roast and Fanta

Fave three tracks: Wilden Lane, Desert Martin and Blythborough

Best thing: The feeling after winning

Worst thing: There's nothing bad about MX

Fave hobby: Basketball

Best buddy: I haven't got one best buddy, just mates at MX

One secret: I drink tea every day before school!



Tom and Liam go bar-to-bar at Brampton

STROKER POWER!

THUMPERS THUMPED IN BRAMPTON

With B/W hotshots Eccles and Watson away on Euro duty and some of last year's bigger guns opting to ride 125s, the 85cc class opener at BYMX Brampton was definitely up for grabs.

Over the five-race distance it's fair to say that the Honda four-bangers generally went down in flames apart from one terrific battling performance from Brad Todd that earned him fourth overall. Sure, there were good individual Honda race performances – Matty Callaghan with a brace of thirds, Jay Lamb was desperately unlucky not to make the podium following his gutsy Bass Honda show and Jack Gardner placed third in the opening moto and fifth in heat four – but the two-stroke gang were in control.

The best performances of their young lives from Nathan Dixon and Stuart Fee caught the eye – Dixon finished in third overall but Fee suffered a last race DNF that robbed him of his just reward. Jason Meara got in on the act too with a best race result of third and fifth overall.

The absolute two-stroke heroes of the weekend however proved to be Liam Knight and Tom Neal. Knight claimed three of the race wins and the championship lead going 1-1-2-1-2. Neal took the other pair of heat wins in a five-race show of ability and speed that fully matched Knight's storming performance.

With that in mind Rage runs the rule over both guys...

Rage: Having ridden both four-stroke and two-stroke machines quite recently in nationals what's your opinion on the widely held belief that if you ride a Honda 150F you have an advantage and better overall chance of lifting a B/W title?

LK: "I think that 150s are fast – especially on hard pack – but I don't think they have an advantage. I didn't enjoy riding the 150 because of the weight. I think the two-stroke is more fun to ride."

Rage: It was quite obvious to see at Brampton that you have already built up a good rapport with new trainer Richard-Mike Jones – can you tell Rage what difference if any the new association has made to your racing style, technique, attitude or preparation etc...

LK: "Richie has helped me out a lot – he has improved my corner speed since I have been with him and he has made me believe in myself more."

Rage: Apart from being delighted with your own win at Brampton what were your overall impressions?

LK: "I actually liked the difficult track conditions. My goal was to be in the top three overall but winning was cool. I think Tom Neal rode awesome. Rob Yates did good as well getting in the top six."

Rage: Finally, who are the peeps you need to thank for all the behind the scenes help?

LK: "Big, big thanks to mum and dad first of all. Also I would like to thank Nicky and Jason Carpenter from Maverik Racing and Drain Away for helping me out over the last three years, RMJ for training me over the last month, Race FX for my kits and Rip N' Roll for goggles."

Rage: Congrats Tom on a great result at BYMX Brampton and in Florida recently winning at the Marion County Loretta Lynn qualifier – does this mean you are through into the August LL finals?

TN: "Yeah, I did well in America. I have to go there one more time to do the regional in Tennessee. The competition in the 12-14 group was similar to here but in the Super Minis Adam Cianciarulo was riding a 118cc and he was unbelievably quick. The whole event was definitely on par with the BYMX ha ha!"

Rage: Apart from being delighted with your own performance at Brampton what were your overall impressions of the B/W section and did you achieve your personal goal?

TN: "I went to Brampton hoping to get a top three and I was surprised with Liam Knight, he impressed me the most – he really has found speed this year. I was also surprised with the Honda 150s – I really expected to be battling with them for the lead."

Rage: Finally Tom, we hear that your dad thought of a novel way to thank all of your sponsors...

TN: "Dad really wanted to thank all the sponsors who have helped over the past years and give something back to them so he decided to have a right good slap up meal at home and invite them all around for the evening. It went really well and other good things have sprung from the evening. It was basically all the guys from Motoshack Graphics, Dennis' Distribution, Auto Smart Cleaning Products, Powerband Suspension, Houseman Race Engines, Kev Kirk Race Preparation, Wurth Automotive Products and Auto Smart Cleaning Products. Also PlumCo Plumbing and Heating Supplies for the help they gave me in America.



FACTFILE

TOM NEAL

DoB: 31-10-96

Hometown: Pickering

Sponsors: Motoshack, MPS Racing, Castrol, Ian Brown Tyres (Michelin), Fox Europe, Dennis' Distribution, Powerband Suspension, Houseman Race Engines, Kev Kirk Race Preparation, Wurth Automotive Products and Auto Smart Cleaning Products. Also PlumCo Plumbing and Heating Supplies for the help they gave me in America.

Fave pro: Dean Wilson

Fave food and drink: Steak and lime and lemonade

Fave three tracks: Dunkirk, Skelder Bank and Mepal

Best thing: Definitely winning races, **Worst thing:** Crashing while leading or hurting yourself

Fave hobby: Remote control cars when they're not broken down

Best buddy: Rob Davidson, Ben Watson, Connor Clark and Jack Gardner

One secret: I used to go hyper off of blue Smarties!

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High-flying Liam's a step closer to becoming a full-on MX pro

A PROPPA TITLE!

LIAM EYES UP ROOKIE CROWN...

Getting a deal to become a professional motocross rider isn't easy and Liam Garland is yet another young man trying to make his name in the sport.

Liam had a stellar year in 2010 and was fighting hard for the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup Big Wheel championship but due to a few mechanical issues ended up third overall. Still, Liam's performances in the first few rounds brought him to the attention of the big teams and notably that of Steve Turner's Proppa.com team. In May last year he signed to the team and is now running a full season with them in the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup Rookie class and also dipping his toe into the professional ranks at the British championships.

So does Steve reckon the Red Bull Pro Nationals are a good shop window for ambitious young riders? "Yep, that's exactly what happened with Liam Garland who joined the team part way through last season after impressing us in the early rounds of the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup."

At the end of 2010 knowing he wasn't going to win the championship Liam elected to ride the last round in the Rookie class in preparation for the season ahead and bagged himself fourth overall – not bad for his first race.

Joining the Proppa.com KTM team is just a step for Liam on

his journey to being a full professional racer. Signing to such a great team with current Red Bull Pro Nationals MX2 champion Martin Barr as a team-mate has to be the right road to take for this young rider. Here at Rage we expect to see him at the front of the Rookie class battling with the likes of Jake Shipton and James Harrison and we wish him well for his year ahead!



© Sutty

FACTFILE

LIAM GARLAND

Home: Portsmouth
Age: 15
Class: Rookie
Height: 1.6m
First race: Cusses Gorse
First bike: Italjet 50
Favourite track: Canada Heights
MX Hero: Justin Barcia
Best MX moment: Joining Steve Turner's race team
Worst MX moment: Cruciate knee damage at Liverpool Supercross 2010

Like: Football, mini bikes, winning
Dislike: Coming second
Film: TGO
TV: Inbetweeners
Music: The Script
Drink: Boost
Food: Lasagne
Car: Vito
Hobbies: Portsmouth FC
Hot: Pixie Lott
Something you're bad at: Golf

ACADEMY AWARDS!

HONDA STEP UP SUPPORT IN 2011

Honda Europe has stepped up to offer more support for red riders in the schoolie paddock through its Xtreme Academy. Designed to help nippers racing nationally in different countries around Europe, in the UK there are some great opportunities for youngsters contesting the BYMX series.

In the UK the Xtreme Academy is a championship aimed exclusively at Honda riders competing on four-strokes in the BYMX Big Wheel division. Not only does it offer a pimping prize pool with a massive £1,000 first prize for the championship but there's also specialist training, discounts and cool opportunities for Honda racers.

For the overall championship there are a massive amount of cool prizes from the academy's sponsors with One Industries, Airoh, No-Toil, Polisport, Vans, Renthal and Samco hoses by Racebikebitz throwing in goodies for the top five riders overall in the series which is scored separately from the main BYMX championship.

The Xtreme Academy is part of Honda's Xtreme programme which relates to everything off-road including motocross, Dakar, enduro and so on. The manufacturer is looking at putting something into the grassroots of the sport and offers opportunities for youngsters starting out their national race careers. It also keeps them in touch with who's doing what at that level so they can pinpoint the stars of tomorrow from an early age.

The Xtreme Academy initiative began in 2010 – last year's UK Xtreme Academy was won by Adam Sterry – and is now taking place in the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Italy. There are more and more countries becoming involved and Honda is determined to expand the series to try and help red riders around Europe. The long-term aim is to get as many young racers on board and to offer as much help as possible to assist these young racers improve or go further in their careers.

For 2011 GP winner Brian Jorgensen has been brought on board as the Xtreme Academy's official trainer and will be tripping over to each country to work with the riders on all aspects of fitness, diet, bike control, style, race craft and riding. Jorgensen had a glittering career before retiring from the sport competitively in 2006 when he took up coaching of the Danish national squad.

This year Xtreme Academy riders will be treated to an exclusive training day at the Thoresway Motoparc track in Lincolnshire where Brian will be joined by Shaun Simpson, Evgeny Bobryshev and Rui Goncalves right before the British MXGP in August. Not only that, Honda UK has teamed up with Rev Racing to represent the Academy at the BYMX meetings. The Rev Racing team has a huge amount of race experience and is on hand to offer help and advice at each race event.

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Adam Sterry, Bradley Pocock and Jake Millward hit the first turn

Race two winner Bradley Pocock



Jake Shipton is the overall winner at Canada Heights

JAKE HITS THE HEIGHTS!

IT'S MXY2 FIRST BLOOD TO SHIPTON

On the undercard of Maxxis round two, this year's ACU MXY2 championship kicks off at the awesome Canada Heights circuit. All the big guns are present and correct and absolutely itching to fire off an impressive salvo – all of them that is except for Nathan Watson who joins the pro ranks in full blown MX2 as the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK cover for sidelined Jake Nicholls.

Graeme Irwin, Ed Allingham, Josh Waterman and Connor Walkley are the four previous champions in what could be the toughest youth competition to win this year as only in Maxxis MXY2 do the likes of Ryan Houghton, Bradley Pocock, Jake Shipton and James Dunn all go head-to-head.

This year's championship has been extended to a five-round, 10-moto affair and the opening brace prove to be both cagey and ultra-tight. Qualification sets the tone for the day with Shipton on the Bournemouth Pro Circuit Kawasaki nailing down the tastiest lap almost two seconds ahead of Houghton on the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK machine. Pocock on the Bike it Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha takes third just a quarter-of-a-second shy of Houghton's time.

In the opening heat Shippers roars around the outside of turn one – virtually clipping the paling fence – to take total command as Jordan Divall, Jake Millward, James Dunn and Houghton give chase. Following a nightmare start Bradders is

back in 33rd but on a charge. By the end of 22 determined minutes Houghton has Shipton right there in his sights but the flag comes down in favour of the green machine.

Divall takes third some 18 seconds adrift of the leading pair as Millward catches the eye in fourth and Pocock salvages valuable points by climbing back into eighth. Houghton records the fastest lap followed by Shipton and Dunn. In Dunny's case it's all change for moto two as following an up and down moto he parks the F machine and throws a leg over the 125cc smoker.

Heat two sees Adam Sterry, Pocock and Millward three astern as they corner for the first time but it's Pocock who muscles his way clear to set the hot pace. As the race pattern takes shape Shipton settles into the number two berth with Houghton in third followed by Divall, Millward and Sterry.

Over the full stretch Houghton makes up one place to get past Shipton but finishes three seconds behind Pocock as the Wild Wolf Yamaha pilot whistles past the flag. Divall finishes where he started in fourth, Millward goes back one to sixth and Mark Perfect hustles his way into a fine fifth place finish – one place better than his heat one return.

So Pocock nails the fastest lap and takes third on the podium following a points tie with Divall, Houghton stands on the second step with the biggest smile on Shipton's face as he takes the winner's spoils and the championship lead.

MXY2

SERIES STANDINGS

1	Jake Shipton	45
2	Ryan Houghton	44
3	Bradley Pocock	38
4	Jordan Divall	38
5	Jake Millward	33
6	Mark Perfect	31

MIGHTY MICKEY!

ECCLES GOES DUTCH IN ONK SERIES

With a sparkling start by both Mickey Eccles and Ben Watson in Holland – plus Liam Knight and Tom Neal ripping it up at BYMX Brampton all on the very same weekend – it could well be a case of Home or Away in 2011 for some guys in the BW class.

Eccles has left Kawasaki and chosen to go orange this year and it's already paying massive dividends with his KTM currently holding down second spot in the Dutch ONK series. Following the opening two rounds Ben Watson on the HM Plant KTM is back in fifth but only five behind Eccles with the points situation through places two to five just about as tight as it gets.

Dutchman Freek van der Vlist on his Suzuki leads the way 10 clear of Eccles. At the Gemert season opener Eccles posted a 2-7 while Watson laid down a 3-5 result. At Halle, Eccles upped his game even further to snatch the opening moto win with a gate-to-flag super-show that was bang on the fast pace of Van der Vlist as Watson came in fifth.

In the second moto the Brits finished together with Watson in ninth and Eccles with his back brake shot in 10th – both guys battled away mid-pack following less than perfect starts and Eccles got himself up to sixth but fell back later in the race as his brake disappeared.

Liam Knight had a thrash around Halle and went home with a very creditable 13th overall finish and a best single race position of 10th in moto one. Max Acres is also flying the flag in Holland this year and so far he has totalled a 19th overall at Gemert and 18th at Halle – his best individual race finish a 10th in the second Gemert moto.

With Mickey off to real flier Rage decided to fire a few questions in his direction...

Rage: "What's the racing plan for 2011?

ME: "It's a full-on European effort this year. I will be doing all the Dutch ONK and all of the UEM rounds – we're in Russia next on April 10. Hopefully at the worlds too in Italy in August."

Rage: After spending the last four years on Kawasaki why did you switch to KTM?

ME: "I have to say thanks to Kawasaki for all the help – but I really needed to be fully competitive this year with a chance of winning races and the KTM absolutely gives me that."

Rage: Are you missing anything about national racing in the UK?

ME: "I'm not missing riding in England at all – just missing some of my good friends at the nationals. Riding in Holland and the rest of Europe is great because nothing compares to the tracks they have out there – there are no circuits in England like them. I have also made some good friends out in Europe and I'm learning new words in different languages – that's a laugh – and I'm teaching them a few English words!"

Rage: How's the sponsorship situation this year Mickey?

ME: "My sponsors are mostly mum and dad and family friends – much thanks to all of them. Also my spannerman Wes and trainer Ronald – they all work really hard for me and that makes the Euro rounds possible. I also have help from Golden Tyres UK plus Motoshock for all my bike graphics. A local shop – Mick Johnson MX – has helped me out with some Fox gear, Pro bike wash and aftercare help. Can I be cheeky though and say if any other sponsors want to help please get in touch – we would really appreciate any help that's on offer as this European game don't come cheap!"

Contact Team Eccles at mickyeccles@aol.com

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at mikegurney55@yahoo.co.uk

HELLOSAILOR!

NOT CONTENT WITH LEADING THE AUSSIE MX CHAMPIONSHIP,

BILLY'S THINKING OF TAKING TO THE HIGH SEAS...

Words by **Billy MacKenzie** Photos **Rudi Baker**

Well it's been a very productive month since last time I wrote. Things have fallen into place nicely and it feels like 2011 is gonna be a good one!

I have been training hard and most importantly eating right for once. I've always eaten reasonably well but this year I have really been sticking to a healthy balanced diet and cutting out everything that's bad for you. I'm down to 79kg which is a big deal for me. For the last few years I have always been hovering around 83 to 84kg. I never knew how much of a difference it could make as I never really felt overweight or that it was holding me back but recently, going for a run or doing the motos, I feel so much lighter on the bike and I find I can push longer. Even my appetite isn't what it used to be – I'm down to just a few small snacks during the day instead of smashing in big lunches and dinners when I hit the hunger stage!

The team for this year had some changes as Troy is now the official manager/owner and shifted the workshops from Brisbane to Toowoomba. There was a lot to do regarding set up – we had to get a new truck, new awning, new everything pretty much so making sure we were ready for the first round was cutting it tight! We had our set up ready from last year and I knew the bike was good so at least that was a weight off my mind. Meanwhile, the truck was a long ways off getting finished and there were a few long hours for the mechanics in the build up to the first round.

When we arrived at Broadford though we arrived in style! The truck looks mean in the new colours and our whole set up just felt right. We have a full sound system in the awning and I was allowed control of the iPod for the day! We had hospitality and in general took a massive leap forward in regards to the Aussie motocross scene. Looking around the pits you could noticeably see the teams are stepping up their games, all the factory teams have semi rigs and the pits are becoming more 'GP' style. It's nice though as the championship still has that Aussie mentality. Everyone is still friendly and chatty and the racing is fun.

Qualifying went okay and I finished a very close second behind Josh Coppins. I was a little upset I didn't pole it but I figured Josh ain't slow and he ain't riding an Aprilia anymore! He's probably forgot more than I know but I was close enough to be excited about the race.

By the time the race rolled around we had all the MX2Y and MX2 races done and dusted, now it was time for our four 15-minute sprint motos. We were sat on the line and the black clouds rolled over! We had the choice of getting two sighting laps or one before the rain started. Everyone opted for one then got behind the gate for the start of our races. I got off to a decent top five start and made my way into the lead by the end of the first lap. The track was

still dry and I pulled out a nice six-second lead and just controlled the race. I felt I was riding okay – maybe a bit tight but it was good enough for the win just as the rain started to fall.

The next three races were mental! When it rains here it rains hard – it doesn't drizzle all day, it just canes it! Normally it's over within 30 minutes but as all our races were back-to-back we had no choice but to just crack on with it! It was a proper mud race, goggles were lost, ruts were full of water, it was more survival! Lucky these Aussies don't enjoy the mud too much so it made my day a lot easier! I just got a good start and stayed on, didn't push too hard and came away with the overall win! Good start to the season with an 18-point lead so everyone was happy.

We had a few things to try with the bike after the weekend though so we done some testing this week with a few new parts. I can honestly say the bike I'm riding now is one of the best bikes I've ever ridden. It's on par with my '08 CAS bike or the '07 De Groot Kawa. I just have a good feeling with it this year and I'm so excited to ride at the moment, I'm gonna keep doing what I'm doing and make sure I'm riding as fast as I can for when I come back and do the British GP!

I've had a new idea this year... I have been thinking about building myself another camper to keep myself amused in the evenings/weekends. Campers are amazing over here! With the coast so close and so beautiful the common pastime when the weather is good is to head down the beach! So during my searching around for the perfect van to make a conversion, Troy called me to ask what's up? "I'm searching for campers," I told him and he told me to stop wasting my time and get a boat!

Well I never really thought about it and now it's all I can think about! You can pick up some unreal boats for the same price as you would spend on a camper! Now when I'm driving anywhere with water around I'm rubber-necking and drifting all over the place checking out the boats. It's definitely planted an idea in my head so now I just gotta keep winning races and banking the bonus money so I can set sail. I hope I get round to it!

What about Jimmy Stewart then? What a champion! I'm supporting him all the way – he's just a kid goofing around. I bet it was hilarious what he was doing! Defo a good way to beat the traffic. I remember we used to do similar things with a loud speaker out the window. People need to relax and enjoy themselves, we are caught up in a whirlpool of bulls**t sometimes and driving is probably the worst. Imagine how many people are stressing out driving to or from work. The roads are one of the worst places for aggro – which is why I'm gonna get a boat!

Have fun guys...

Billy 11





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